

08 January 2021

Together We're Better Stakeholder Update

The [announcement](#) of a third national lockdown, which began on 6 January, will have been, for many, a tough pill to swallow. It is, however, fundamentally the right decision for the country.

The lockdown comes as spikes in positive cases have been broadly reported. There has also been a huge increase in pressure across the NHS, with the threat of services becoming overwhelmed if swift action was not taken. This comes at a time where we are seeing the new variant of the virus spreading at pace across the country.

The 7-day case rate for England has increased to 572.1 cases per 100,000 population, largely due to London and the south east, whilst the latest Staffordshire 7-day case rate was 462 cases per 100,000 population and 362 for Stoke-on-Trent. Both still below the England average, but rising fast. East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire have passed 500 cases per 100,000 population.

There is no escaping the fact that the NHS is in a difficult position as cases continue to rise, made worse by the more infectious new variant. This is likely to continue for a while yet, until lockdown and the vaccines take effect.

The announcement last week of the Oxford Astra-Zeneca vaccination is welcome news, as it doesn't have the same cold storage requirements as the Pfizer vaccine. This means we can offer it more widely to at risk groups, in particular housebound patients. We've also heard today (8 January) that the Moderna vaccine has now been approved for use in the UK. It is, however, being widely reported that this vaccine will not be available in the UK until March time.

The Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine arrived in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent this week. As of yesterday, JCB's Compact Products at Cheadle is being used to vaccinate vulnerable patients aged over 80 from across the rural Staffordshire Moorlands. The Moorlands Primary Care Network (PCN) is one of 12 PCNs across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent that received the new vaccine this week.

The others are About Better Care (North Staffs), Burntwood, Hanley, Bucknall and Bentilee, Leek and Biddulph, Longton, Newcastle North, Newcastle South, Rugeley and Great Haywood, Shelton, South West Stoke and Whitfield PCNs.

Over the festive break, residents in 20 care homes also received the first dose of the vaccine with more rapidly following this week and over the coming weeks. These care homes are being supported by the PCNs and, due to the logistical challenges of the vaccines, we have started with larger care homes first.

Out in the community, we have seen a fantastic response from local patients and uptake for the vaccine has been high. Nationally more than 944,539 people had received the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in the UK by the end of December. As of today, 17 out of our 23 PCN sites are now offering the vaccination, providing access

to around 73% of our at-risk population. This is in addition to our hospital hub at UHNM, with further hubs launching in the near future.

Subject to the national assurance process, we anticipate that our remaining PCNs will be live within the next few weeks, if not sooner, offering 100% coverage across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This was always meant to be a gradual roll out, in line with national guidance, but not all areas across the country have been able to make such rapid progress. We would therefore like to thank our PCNs for their herculean efforts.

For any over 80s who have not yet been contacted, we would like to reassure you that they will be contacted in the near future. We will then continue to offer the vaccine to the most at-risk groups as determined nationally. [This poster](#) helps to explain who will receive the vaccine first.

You may have seen the national change in guidance, that more people are being offered the first dose of the vaccine, by extending the period for the second dose to be given. We have worked with our clinicians to respond to this guidance. We welcome the opportunity to be able to offer the vaccine to more people and support the wider community. We are working with the vaccinators to communicate any changes to appointments and to ensure that all people are invited for their second dose within the recommended 12 weeks. It is important that people still attend their appointment unless they have been instructed not to.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's independent advice is that this approach will maximise the benefits of both vaccines, allowing the NHS to help the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. It will ensure that more at-risk people are able to get meaningful protection from a vaccine in the coming weeks and months, reducing deaths and starting to ease pressure on our NHS.

We want to stress that even when people have had the vaccine, they must continue to follow the rules around social distancing and wearing protective face coverings or PPE for health and care workers. This is because it takes several weeks to gain protection from the vaccine and there is also still a risk of carrying the virus and transmitting it to others.

Like everywhere, rates are spreading at an alarming rate in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. While nobody wants further restrictions, the best chance of making sure we return to the freedoms we once knew is by sticking to the rules, only go out in line with the guidance, remember to wash your hands, wear a face covering and keep a two-metre distance. Hands, Face, Space.

The key messages to remember are:-

- A national lockdown is now in place. You must not leave your home or be outside of your home except where necessary. Stay home. Do it to 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.

- 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. Do it to stop the spread.
- 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. Do it to stop the spread.

If you are clinically vulnerable, you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Follow the link for some additional advice for [people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus](#). Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend work, school, college or university, and limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

One third of people who have the virus don't show any symptoms. So, if you can't stay at home because of work etc, then please do get a test if asked to do so, even if you have no symptoms. Identifying more people who have the virus, so that they can self-isolate, will help us reduce the spread of infection.

Please remember to remain vigilant and be aware of coronavirus scams. Which? has identified a [fake NHS text](#) that has been circulating, telling people they are eligible to apply for the coronavirus vaccine. With the recent approval of vaccines in the UK, these types of scam attempts are likely to continue as fraudsters look to take advantage of the rollout to so many people. [This poster](#) produced by the National Cyber Security Centre includes a number of tips, guidance and contact details that may prove useful. Cold calls regarding the vaccine are also beginning to take place with scammers asking people to pay for it over the phone. If you receive one of these calls, please hang up.

Everyone has their own special reasons why they want to see the back of the pandemic. They may need to get their business up and running, they may want to see their grandchildren, or they may want to get back into the gym. We're all different. That is why the Do It For What Matters campaign was launched across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It features ordinary people who, for their own reasons, want to defeat COVID-19. You can find out more information about the campaign at: <http://stopthespread.doingourbit.info/>. Why don't you post your own video telling us what you're doing it for and use the hashtag #DoingOurBit?

The latest episode of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent CCGs' podcast is now available. In this podcast, GP and Chair of NHS East Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Dr Rachel Gallyot talks about:

- how primary care is coping through COVID-19 and winter
- the work she is doing with her patients at the Alrewas Surgery, and in her role as Chair of the CCG

- And gives an update on how primary care is still working, seeing patients face to face where possible, the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, and what we all can do to help going forward.

You can listen to the latest episode on [YouTube](#).

Some good news is that patients across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent can now benefit from receiving a timeslot for Emergency Departments and Same Day Emergency Care services (for example DVT clinics in hospital) if they need to attend by contacting 111 first. From the 1 December, NHS 111 were able to offer patients timeslots at the Royal Stoke University Hospital and Queen's Hospital in Burton.

Before being offered a timeslot, patients will be assessed first by the call handler at 111 and then by the clinicians at 111. This ensures we get the patient to the right place, first time. The clinicians at 111 will then transfer the patient's information through to the receiving clinic, so that the patient's background is known upon arrival.

By phoning 111 first and receiving a timeslot the patient will hopefully see the following benefits:

- The patient will be advised on the best time to attend, thereby avoiding peak times and reducing their wait.
- Clinicians at the ED will have the details of the clinical assessment undertaken by NHS 111 so know what to expect when the patient attends their timeslot.

In December, of those patients who were assessed by 111 and received a timeslot, 85% were offered a timeslot to be seen within 2 hours. Some patients who presented with leg pain and suspected deep vein thrombosis, asthma, suspected hernia, neck and groin pain were invited to completely bypass the Emergency Department avoiding unnecessary delays and be booked directly into a more appropriate clinic for their needs.

Early patient feedback suggests that the service is working well, and patient experience was good. Staff have reported that this has helped to improve social distancing within hospital waiting rooms.

Another new initiative that is getting started is a brand-new parent / carer forum that is being set up for parents/carers of children with a special need or a disability. The forum will meet regularly to discuss the views of parents / carers and work together with council staff to make positive changes involving children who have a special need or disability.

Staffordshire (not counting Stoke-on-Trent) is made up of eight different districts / areas and it is hoped that there will be a parent / carer forum in each. Setting up these forums will help to build even stronger structures and practices for our young people and will make sure parents have a voice. To find out more you can attend an information event which are being held on the following dates:

- Cannock and Lichfield: Thursday 21st January 2021 - 10:00am – 12:00pm
- Stafford and South Staffs: Thursday 21st January 2021 - 18:00pm – 20:00pm

- Newcastle and Moorlands: Wednesday 27th January 2021 - 12:30pm – 14:30pm
- East Staffs and Tamworth: Friday 29th January 2021 - 10:00am – 12:00pm

The information will be the same at each event, so if you can't attend the meeting that's linked to your local area you can attend any that suits you. For more information and to find out how you can be involved, please contact Catherine.ratcliffe@cafamily.org.uk who will send you the link to the Zoom meeting.

Useful Resources

Lots of useful tools and resources 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:

- [COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Hands. Face. Space resources](#)
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe](#) social media animations
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe posters](#) posters
- [NHS Test and Trace posters](#)
 - [BSL, easy read and large print formats](#)
- [NHS COVID-19 App resources](#)
- [Wearing a face mask – translations](#)
(Arabic/French/Kurdish/Lithuanian/Pashto/
Polish/Portuguese/Romanian/Russian/Spanish/Tigrinya)
- [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/>
- University in January [resources](#)
- [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/>