

It's now been a week since beer gardens, gyms, non-essential shops and hairdressers have reopened, amongst many other businesses, to which many of us turn for our leisure activities. We've seen pictures across the news of determined folk sat out in the rain and even snow to get their first pint or plate of 'pub grub', and it's certainly been a rush to get in for those haircuts. All in all, a very welcome step forward for many.

The Holy month of Ramadan also began last Monday and will end on the evening of Wednesday, 12 April. During the Holy month, observing Muslims are required to abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk for 30 days – this is known as fasting.

Many of you will realise that this means the Holy month of Ramadan is taking place during a key time in the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Some observing Muslims will be invited to receive their first or second dose during this time and we know that this may cause some uncertainty over breaking the fast. We are working with GPs, community and faith leaders, councils and providers to provide guidance and reassurance to our local Muslim communities on this matter.

The key things to note are:

- Local GPs are urging Muslims not to delay having their COVID-19 vaccine – first or second dose – during the holy month of Ramadan
- The safest and most effective way to protect yourself, your family and those most at risk from the virus is by having a vaccine when you are offered it by the NHS
- To reassure the Muslim community, the [British Islamic Medical Association](#) has reviewed the analysis of Islamic scholars and confirmed that having the vaccine does not invalidate the fast. If you are still unsure whether you should have a vaccine during the holy month please speak to your local Imam for guidance
- The vaccine does not contain pork or other animal, foetal or alcohol products - this reflects the advice of the majority of Islamic scholars that it is permissible
- If you are taking prescribed medicines, you should continue taking them during Ramadan, but check with your GP if the doses need to be adjusted or the times you take them need to be changed
- If you have diabetes and want to fast, please speak to your GP or diabetes nurse about the safest way to do this. Remember that there is an exemption for people with diabetes, especially if you're on insulin or have any medical complications.

We also want to reassure the rest of the residents of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent that, if you have received your first dose of a vaccine, you will be called forward for your second dose. Second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are due to be given within 12 weeks of the first dose. Most of the time, you will be contacted about 11 weeks after your first vaccine, but sometimes this might be a few days later. Please don't worry about whether or not you'll get your second dose – we want to reassure you that we know who has had their first doses and when, and we are confident that there is plenty of vaccine to go round. You will be called when you can get your second dose and this will be within 12 weeks of your first dose.

You may have seen that last week three pilot sites in the West Midlands began using the Moderna vaccine, with one of these pilot sites being at our Tunstall centre. This vaccine uses similar technology to the Pfizer vaccine. However, this does not require such extreme refrigeration for storage – it can be stored for 30 days at normal fridge temperatures and can be kept for up to six months at -20C if needed. We expect that this vaccine, alongside the Pfizer jab, may be used for those under 30s with rearranged appointments, following

the recent advice about the AstraZeneca vaccine.

It's worth noting, though, that some people under 30 do fall into the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and have already had the AstraZeneca jab. If you fall into that category, had no serious side-effects from your first dose and don't have any of the listed conditions highlighted by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), you should still come forward for your second dose of AstraZeneca. The list of conditions highlighted by the MHRA as needing further consideration, current or past, are:

- Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis
- Antiphospholipid syndrome
- Acquired or genetic haemophilia
- Heparin induced thrombocytopenia
- Major thrombosis with thrombocytopenia

Twice-weekly COVID-19 testing is also big on the agenda this week and will be a part of our routines now for some time. Lateral flow testing offers quick results – confirmation in under 30 minutes. You can now access these tests via:

- A home ordering service
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- community testing, offered by councils
- collection at a local test site during specific test collection time windows
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- a new 'Pharmacy Collect' service

Alternatively, if you'd rather go to a testing site and be helped with the test, you can book appointments online at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/testing> for Staffordshire and <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/bookacovid19test> for Stoke-on-Trent.

People with symptoms should always self-isolate and book a test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or ring 119.

Integrated Care System Board

Last Thursday (15 April) the Integrated Care System (ICS) held its second ever Board meeting in public. Members of the public were invited to send in questions ahead of the meeting that were relevant to that meeting's agenda. Thank you to those who sent in questions to the Board and to everyone who watched the live stream of the meeting.

If you missed the meeting, or would like to watch it back, you can access the recording via [this page](#). The next meeting in public will take place on Thursday, 17 June 2021 at 2pm until 4pm. The agenda and meeting papers will be available on the above webpage one week before the meeting. Once again, members of the public will be invited to send in any questions relating to the agenda. The livestream link will also be available one week prior to the meeting date.

Useful Resources...

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has released a new [poster](#) and [a film](#)– narrated by [GP Dr Hilary Jones MBE](#) – which reminds the public that they must stay outside when meeting others.

Easy read resources:

- [Covid Vaccine film](#) (produced with Skills for People and Learning Disability England)
- [Easy Read: Covid vaccination \(PHE\)](#)
- [Easy Read: What to expect after the vaccine? \(PHE\)](#)
- [Easy Read: Adult consent form \(PHE\)](#)
- [Easy Read: How to test yourself for Covid-19 before you go to hospital](#)
- [Easy Read: How to test yourself for Covid-19 at home](#)
- [NHS easy read Covid vaccination frequently answered questions](#)

New social media campaign to target false vaccine information:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has [launched a new social media campaign](#) to tackle false vaccine information online. A [toolkit](#) with content designed to be shared via Whatsapp and Facebook community groups, as well as Twitter, Youtube and Instagram, to tackle false information has also been created.

Further social media materials to support the recently announced 'roadmap' for exiting the COVID restrictions have been released, which include:

- [Posters and information](#) about surge testing, workplace testing, details of UK ports of entry and exit, plus information for university students; 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](#).

Campaign materials added to the Campaign Resource Centre:

- [New 'Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air' Assets](#) including: [Social Animations](#)
- [New Road Map Assets](#) including [social media statics](#)
- New resources for [Passover](#)
- [Back to School and Vaccine Coronavirus Resources](#)
- [Workplace Testing](#) including marketing assets for [local authorities](#) to engage with local businesses and [employers](#), as well as [private and public businesses and employers](#) to engage their employees
- [Symptoms and Isolation](#) – New assets to encourage symptomatic testing

British Sign Language resources:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-british-sign-language-resources>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-vaccination-programme>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-vaccination-programme#leaflets,-posters-and-resources>

Other COVID-19 resources:

- Public Health England (PHE) [guidance](#) for everyone to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others.
- [Fraud social media](#) and [explainer videos](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [A guide to your COVID-19 vaccination easy read document](#)
- [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 COVID-19 to maintain strength and balance](#)
- [Translated information leaflets for parents with new-borns during COVID-19](#)
- [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 COVID-19 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 COVID-19, please visit the [NHS](#) and [government](#) websites.

Together We're Better is the health and care partnership for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit's (MLCSU) Communications and Engagement Team is now working with Together We're Better to produce and distribute this newsletter. Contact details held by the Together We're Better partnership are now maintained by MLCSU in order to deliver this newsletter.

If you no longer wish to receive this news update [you can unsubscribe or update your preferences here](#)

To contact us email twb.comms@nhs.net or call 01785 276926