

# Together We're Better COVID-19 Stakeholder Update

10 May 2021

We've come a long way locally since the start of the pandemic. The shift in focus on recovery and the next 12 months across the local health and care system and wider has become more apparent in recent weeks. Transmission rates remain relatively stable and admissions and beds occupied by patients with COVID-19 have dropped to single figures.

The gradual decrease in rates over the last few weeks continued again for most areas last week. The vaccination programme has had a huge impact on the hospital admission rates, as well as the actual virus transmission rates. In some initial study groups this is showing to be up to half, which is really promising. The vaccine is doing exactly what it should be doing and what the scientists assured us all that it would.

The rate in Staffordshire is now 14.7 per 100,000 – but there are fluctuations across the county, with some areas as low as 6.7 (Lichfield) and 9.9 (Cannock), and other areas higher – the highest being 21.7 for East Staffs. Stoke remains higher than we'd like at 35.1 but it has levelled off a little. The national England average is at 22.5 and regional for West Midlands is 20.1.

As mentioned, we're continuing to see a much-improved position for hospital bed occupancy, too. Most of our local hospitals have managed to sustain single figures for COVID-19 in-patients with eight at University Hospitals North Midlands NHS Trust, eight at University Hospitals Derby and Burton and three at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust. Hopefully this will continue and we won't see an increase following lock down restrictions being lifted. The number of daily deaths is also near rock bottom. A big thank you goes to GPs who are working across the Primary Care Networks (collective networks of GP surgeries, working together) to deliver the majority of the vaccinations to the population of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The gradual easing of restrictions is key and what is happening in India and other countries is an example of just how quickly and badly things can go wrong. Professor Jonathan Van-Tam was challenged on the Government's softly, softly approach recently, but no one wants to see another surge. Taking each step one at a time on the roadmap to recovery, giving time in between each step and monitoring the new case rates and death rates, is how and why we've come so far already. We have a lot to lose if we get it wrong. That's why we really need to keep going and keep following the restrictions – even after having both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Don't give up now. We must keep observing the hands, face, space and fresh air behaviours, and getting tested twice a week to prevent the spread of infection and keep rates low. And with more testing options available, it's now easier than ever to get a test. For those without symptoms, tests are available at your local community testing centres, pop-up testing centres (which travel around the county and city), and your local pharmacies. All testing centres offer walk-in

tests, and the option to pick up a pack of tests to take with you, so where necessary you can carry out twice-weekly testing in the comfort of your own home.

It really is key to get tested if you are asymptomatic, particularly if you're out and about, as one in three of us may be carrying the virus and not know it. Please do request your tests, do them twice a week and report your positive and negative test results online. Only about one in five test results are being reported, so please do report yours. If you do have symptoms though, please go for a PCR test at one of the testing sites.

On Tuesday 4 May, letters were sent out to 40–41-year-olds and apparently texts to this age group have been very popular, as I'm sure they will be for the younger cohorts as we move through the age groups.

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to make sure no one gets left behind. There are people in the first few groups that haven't yet had a vaccine, and every effort is being made to get these done. Please help to promote the vaccine to your communities and encourage your friends and family to book their test if they are eligible.

More information on the vaccination programme can be found in this week's [COVID-19 vaccination bulletin](#).

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## Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The six CCGs are making plans for their (AGM) this year, all six into one, the same as last year. A date is yet to be confirmed but it's likely to be in September. Clearly, highlights will focus on the local response to COVID-19 and the journey to becoming an Integrated Care System (ICS). More information will be shared when available.

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## Free IT Stafford

FreeIT Stafford is a non-profit, unincorporated community organisation made up of a network of local IT repair professionals working voluntarily in their spare time.

FreeIT provide free computer equipment to schools, charities, community groups, the voluntary sector, and other neglected corners of society and good causes, who are spending money on their IT provisions that could be better used elsewhere in their missions, or where that money simply doesn't exist in the first place.

This is achieved by collecting public donations of used PCs, laptops and tablets which will be repaired wherever possible, then securely wiped, modernised, and redistributed for free

to those who need them, instead of those devices ending up in landfill or forgotten in a cupboard.

FreeIT also offer a "rinse and return" service to local organisations who have their own equipment which is in need of refurbishment to benefit their clients.

FreeIT can be contacted on telephone number 01785 531199 or email [freeitstafford@virginmedia.com](mailto:freeitstafford@virginmedia.com).

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## Healthwatch Staffordshire Survey

Healthwatch Staffordshire have been asked to deliver a presentation at the next Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. In light of the roadmap out of lockdown a survey has been devised to understand how people in Staffordshire are feeling about returning to normal in a very bite sized approach on the less is more principal.

The survey can be found [here](#) and is only open until Wednesday 19 May 2021.

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## Public survey to review the child and adolescent health services (CAMHS) in south Staffordshire

The current contract for the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) in south Staffordshire, delivered by Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT), is being refreshed.

We are directly contacting as many parents, carers, current and former users of the CAMHS service, support organisations and other stakeholders as possible, to invite their involvement in the review.

An [online survey](#) is open until Sunday 20 June, 2021 to gather views. An [easy read version](#) is also available. Please help promote this survey so that as many appropriate people as possible can share their views on the current service and to suggest ways it could be improved.

The main aims of this engagement are understanding which services are currently being used and to help shape children and adolescent mental health services for the future.

It will also help to review existing services from a service user perspective and to identify any areas that need improving.

The feedback provided will be collated and analysed and a report produced. The report will be used by the commissioners of the service to inform the new service specification for

CAMHS (delivered by MPFT) and design and shape children and adolescent mental health services in the future.

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## International Nurses Day - 12 May 2021

Organised annually by the International Council of Nurses, International Nurses Day celebrates the contribution and commitment that nurses make to societies around the world. The date has a very strong significance, being the birthday of perhaps the world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale.

The event is coordinated by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to ensure that the invaluable contributions of nurses to the health of people globally are recognised.

The theme for International Nurses Day 2021 is 'nursing the world back to health', with a focus on the 'true value of nurses to the people of the world.' Annette Kennedy, the ICN President, has said that, 'This global COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world the important role that nurses play in keeping people healthy across their lifespan' and so the day will be focused on the future of healthcare. You can learn more about International Nurses Day 2021 and other ICN events by visiting their website [here](#).

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## Patient views sought on Mental Health Crisis Houses

We are asking for your support in promoting a Safe Spaces survey which has been launched today, Monday 10 May, by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The survey aims to obtain feedback from patients who have accessed one of the two mental health crisis houses located in Stoke-on-Trent (Phoenix House) and Cannock Chase (Brendan House).

We want to establish whether current services provided by the two crisis houses meet the needs of the local population, and if new ways of working which have been introduced during the pandemic (telephone and virtual support), have been positive in supporting patients' mental health.

Please share the link to the survey with your contacts.

The survey can be completed [online](#).

People without an internet connection can call 0333 150 2155 and complete the survey confidentially over the phone.

We are also offering patients the opportunity to share their feedback in a virtual focus group on Friday 21 May, 12 noon to 1pm. Patients need to [register to attend](#) the event.

The survey will be open for four weeks ending on Sunday 6 June.

Thank you for your support.

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## Diabetes Prevention Week 2021, 10-16 May

Diabetes Prevention Week 2021 takes places from 10-16 May. Some key facts can be found below:

- More than 4.8 million people in the UK have diabetes; this is equal to one in 14 people.
- Around 90% people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes, which can be prevented or delayed through being more physically active, eating healthily and managing your weight.
- The health complications of getting Type 2 diabetes can be serious and life changing – this could be loss of sight, loss of limbs, increased risk of heart disease, stroke & kidney disease.
- A third of people who died of COVID-19 in England had diabetes. However, better management of the condition can help improve control and lead to better outcomes.
- Black and South Asian people have a higher risk of getting Type 2 diabetes after the age of 25, compared with those from a White background where risk increases after the age of 40.
- The fact that two thirds of our nation are overweight, or obesity coupled with the increased risk of more severe outcomes from coronavirus means that there has never been a better time to lose weight, exercise more and eat more healthily.
- As the first national initiative of its kind in the world, over half a million people have been referred on to the NHS prevention programme and those with overweight or obesity completing the programme lost on average 3.6kg, in line with the studies that demonstrated reduced onset of Type 2 diabetes.
- If you think you are at risk of type 2 diabetes, would like more information on the Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme or have any other concerns related to your health, please contact your GP practice.
- You can also complete the Diabetes UK 'Know Your Risk' tool (<https://riskscore.diabetes.org.uk/start>) to register yourself onto a free local Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme session.
- The programme provides personalised support to help people achieve a healthy weight, improve their diet and become more physically active, all together which have been shown to reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- Nationally, over half a million people have been referred into the programme, and those completing the programme who were overweight or obese lost on average 3.6kg, greater than originally predicted.

- In the Midlands, 37,799 people have attended the first NHS DPP session with an average weight loss of 3.1kg, 6 months after attending the first session. (*source: validated regional report for data up till Feb 2021*)
- Access to trusted information and support is key to helping people manage their diabetes; The NHS's highly successful, world-leading diabetes prevention programme is helping hundreds of thousands of people take small steps to take control of their own health.

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## Mental Health Awareness Week 2021 - 10-16 May 2021

COVID-19 has impacted the whole country; for almost everyone, life has had to change fundamentally. Research shows that since the start of the pandemic there has been an increase in a range of mental health conditions for adults, from low wellbeing, sleep problems and anxiety to depression.

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week theme is 'nature'. Many of us know that being around nature can have a positive impact on our mood and overall mental health. Studies have shown that acts as seemingly small as looking after a house plant can even have a positive impact on our overall mental health.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, try to do these three things:

- experience nature: take time to recognise and grow your connection with nature during the week. Take a moment to notice and celebrate nature in your daily life – you might be surprised by what you notice!
- share nature: take a photo, video or sound recording and share the connections you have made during the week with colleagues, family and friends
- talk about nature: record your experience and discuss with others about finding new ways to connect with nature in your local environment.

You can join the discussion on Twitter about how you are connecting with nature by using the hashtags '#ConnectWithNature' and '#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek' to share your stories. This might be as simple as listening to the birds, touching the bark of trees, smelling flowers or writing a poem about our favourite nature spot. Visit the [Mental health foundation site](#) for more information and to access further resources.

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## Useful Resources...

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has released a [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 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 resources:

- '[Variant Surge Testing](#)' campaign
- '[Back to School](#)' testing
- '[Covid-19 Vaccine](#)'
- '[Universal Rapid Testing](#)'
- '[Face. Space. Fresh Air.](#)'

[Road Map Assets](#) including [social media statics](#)

[Passover](#) / the month of Ramadan

[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.