



**Working with you to make Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
the healthiest places to live and work**

29 March 2021

Together We're Better COVID-19 Stakeholder Update

Last week many people joined in with doorstep vigils to mark one year since the country entered the first lockdown. Marie Curie announced a 'national day of reflection', for those who have sadly lost their lives to be remembered. Our hearts go out to anyone and everyone that has lost a loved one due to COVID-19, whether that be here in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, nationally, or even further afield. You can read Prem Singh's briefing on the website, sharing his reflections [here](#).

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all you are doing. To the health and care workers, the key workers keeping our country going, carers and everyone beyond. Whether you're a nurse, a social care worker, a delivery driver, a supermarket worker or simply doing your bit by staying at home and following all the government restrictions – thank you.

12 months on from the start of our fight against Coronavirus we are continuing to see a much-improved situation across the county. This is down to a combination of factors, including the success of the vaccination programme and the abundance of self-testing that's now available. Most people are continuing to observe the isolation guidance and mask rules in shops etc. which should keep us moving in this downward trajectory and keep the numbers low.

The statistics are showing that 88% of everyone who has died to date from COVID-19 were over 80 years old. This also pushes home the importance of the vaccination programme to protect these members of our community against the virus as best as we possibly can, and the success of which can now also be seen in the lower bed occupancies across our hospitals.

So far over 45% of our overall population in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and 56% of the adult population have had their first dose of the vaccine. We do however still have

some work to do still on priority group 6, which is those adults aged 16 to 65 years in an at-risk group.

Whilst our penetration levels across cohorts 1-9 are very strong, we are seeing a lower uptake amongst those with autism, renal and liver failure, sickle cell disease, severe mental illness and those who are alcohol dependent.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to reach the smaller numbers that remain within each cohort. And we would like to reiterate the huge thank you for everyone's dedication and hard work. We are committed to leaving nobody behind.

There has been lots of targeted work happening with our ethnic minorities and ethnic groups, as well as people with learning difficulties and the homeless.

The focus this week is to encourage anyone over the age of 50 and those in at risk groups to book their vaccine as soon as possible.

While we will see a significant reduction in vaccine supply during April, we can confidently reassure people that locally we have a good supply. We have enough for everyone in cohorts 1-9 to receive their first dose as well as to fulfil any second doses that are due over the coming weeks.

Health and social care workers yet to be vaccinated are being encouraged to book their appointment now. The National Booking System will be in hibernation for first doses during April but appointments are available at all vaccination sites across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent until 31 March. Anyone who is in priority groups 1-9 and is yet to have their vaccination should book their vaccination now. You can book via the National Booking System until 31 March, or by calling 119. Where you have a second dose booked at a vaccination centre please continue to attend that booking.

You can read more local COVID-19 news in the COVID-19 vaccination bulletins of [18 March 2021](#) and [26 March 2021](#).

The latest COVID-19 mortality figures show how far we have come even in a very short space of time, thanks to the hard work of health and care teams, the continued cautious approach, and the public sticking to the restrictions. Thank you. They also show the vaccination programme starting to take effect, and as it ramps up at pace it will provide protection for more and more people. However, we must be wary, as we have been in a similar position before. At the beginning of June last year, as the first lockdown was beginning to lift and children began to go back to school, the mortality figures were below the level they are now. They then began to rise as more and more restrictions were lifted. Although we didn't have a vaccine then, it remains vital that we all continue to be as cautious as possible, as we cannot afford another major spike in infections.

Although things are definitely looking up we still cannot be complacent and must continue to comply with the guidance, and the hands, face space rules to control the spread of the virus. This advice applies even to those who have received a vaccine. You can still catch the virus and even pass it on to those around you once you've had your vaccine, so we must all still be vigilant for some time.

Getting tested regularly is also still very important and any household in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent where there is either a child attending school, or a member of school staff, can qualify for free rapid testing equipment to use at home. It means parents can have access to the lateral flow tests, rather than just children.

The Community Collect scheme means that kits can be collected at community testing sites. To find out more about the scheme and where home kits will be available from follow

the appropriate link for [Staffordshire residents](#) or [Stoke-on-Trent residents](#).

There are plenty of testing options available for all residents of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. For more information on the COVID-19 testing options open to Staffordshire residents please visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/testing and <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/bookacovid19test> for residents of Stoke-on-Trent.

You can find some key messages and assets to help remind people to keep following the rules via your channels and networks in the [Cabinet Offices stakeholder and influencer toolkit](#).

Other news...

NHS achieves key Long Term Plan commitment to roll out Integrated Care Systems across England

Patients will have better, more joined up care as Integrated Care Systems, which require all parts of the NHS to work with each other and their partners, are rolled out across the country from next month.

The final 13 areas, including Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, will be formally designated “[integrated care systems](#)” (ICSs) from April 1, hitting a major milestone in the NHS Long Term Plan.

A total of 42 ICSs, which bring together hospital, community and mental health trusts, GPs and other primary care services with local authorities and other care providers will cover the whole of England.

The Government has set out a White Paper which will build on recommendations from NHSEI to remove current legislative barriers to integration across health and social care bodies, and foster collaboration between NHS and local government organisations. This reflects the thousands of views received from every part of the health and care system and the public as part of recent engagement on what local leaders need.

An animation explaining more about ICSs can be found [here](#).

Ramadan

The Ramadan start date for 2021 is expected to begin on Monday 12 April 2021, following the sighting of the moon over Mecca. Ramadan may be a few weeks away, but it's likely to coincide with many second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (and some first doses). Getting the COVID-19 vaccine does not break the Fast and Muslim communities are encouraged not to delay getting the vaccine during Ramadan. Please use the [messages and images attached](#) across your communication channels to encourage people to continue to book their vaccine appointments in the coming weeks. Follow this [link](#) for guidance on Ramadan safety guidance to minimise the risk of catching COVID-19.

Volunteers

As you may be aware St John Ambulance have been helping the NHS Vaccination Programme by recruiting 30,000 volunteers in order to help vaccinate and support

vaccination sites across England, and from those 30,000 21,683 people have been trained to date.

Applications in most areas are now closed as targeted numbers have now been reached. However, in the West Midlands some more people are needed to help, due to the number of sites supported.

Sites currently supported are:

- Millennium Point, Birmingham City
- Artrix Centre, Bromsgrove
- Telford International Centre
- The Black Country Museum
- Daniel Platt Park, Stoke-on-Trent
- Al-Abbas Islamic Centre, Birmingham
- Aston Villa FC, Birmingham
- Kingston Centre, Stafford
- The Lakes, Lichfield
- The Bowling Centre, Shrewsbury

See the [attached letter](#) and the website: [Coronavirus | St John Ambulance \(sja.org.uk\)](https://www.sja.org.uk) for further information.

Share your views on the roles of Allied Health Professionals

Have you used health and care services in the last few years? A national online conversation is being launched for people to give their views on what they think about how Allied Health Professionals can support their health and care needs. Your views are especially important if you have been seen by an 'Allied Health Professional'. These important roles include paramedics, dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and many more.

The Allied Health Professions (AHPs) are the third largest workforce in the NHS, comprising of 14 professions and they want to hear from as many members of the public as possible so that a new strategy for how Allied Health Professionals can support people, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan, can be created. The conversation is open until the end of March. You can find out more and give your views [here](#)

Let's Beat Loneliness Together

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic it's been evident that communities will take action when something is important to them. Over the past year, the number of people volunteering, giving their time to support others, and doing small things that make a big difference has increased. Two surveys to help understand people's concerns and what's important to them were run and one theme that was highlighted in these surveys was loneliness.

To help address the issue of loneliness in Staffordshire the Let's Beat Loneliness Together campaign has been developed. You can read full details [here](#).

Useful Resources...

New 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 [Back to School and Vaccine Coronavirus Resources](#)
- The Government's updated [guidance on 'National lockdown: Stay at Home'](#)
- [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
- [New Stay at Home Assets](#)
- [Social Media Statics](#) including new assets to make it clear to those that have had the Covid-19 vaccine they still need to stay home and stick to the rules

Links to the latest hard-hitting Stay at Home “Look into their eyes” creative and resources to support those who are delivering surge testing for new variants and those delivering community testing can also be found on the [PHE Campaign Resource Centre](#).

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

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](#)
- [Stay Home](#) – Look into my eyes creative
- [COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [A guide to your COVID-19 vaccination easy read document](#)
- [Don't help the virus spread](#) poster
- [Face. Space resources](#)
- [NHS Test and Trace posters](#): White background easy print for drive through testing and self-isolate
- [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



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