



# COVID-19 Briefing



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## COVID-19 ICS update - 4 February 2021

This bulletin provides important information for people working in health and care across the North East and North Cumbria regarding guidance and actions being co-ordinated across our region to care for patients, staff and our communities in the light of COVID-19. We will do our best to keep you updated with the latest information and key decisions from the Health Co-ordinating Group. This group is led by Alan Foster, executive lead for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System. If you have any questions or would like us to send vital information to partners through this bulletin, please contact us [here](#).

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## Message from Alan Foster



### One year on – thank you

I am sure like me you were moved by all the messages of support and media coverage marking the fact that it is now one year on from when the first COVID-19 patients were cared for at Newcastle's High Consequence Infectious Diseases Unit.

As I mentioned in last week's bulletin it has been a year of great sadness but also one where we have pulled together to do the very best for our communities. I would like to reiterate my thanks and pay tribute to all our health and care teams, and other key

workers, for all they have done and continue to do, to keep us all safe.

### **The latest picture across the region**

The picture is slowly improving across the region and we are seeing a reduction in the number of patients with COVID-19 being admitted to our hospitals, but only a very small reduction in those needing critical care. Currently there's around 1,300 COVID-19 patients in our hospitals across the region and that had been sitting at around 1,500 for a number of weeks so this is an improvement. Things are going in the right direction and we are also seeing a continued decline in the number of community cases too, which is reassuring. That said, this has been unrelenting for staff and supporting them in the weeks and months ahead remains so important.

### **500,000 vaccines delivered across our region**

Absolutely outstanding achievement across our region that we have now delivered over 500,000 COVID vaccines. I could not be prouder, and I am sure you feel the same too. The latest figures up to the 31st January have been released today and can be found [here](#).

And there's more good news on this front for our region this week – that the Novavax vaccine will be manufactured in Billingham in Stockton on Tees once it receives approval. We have also been closely involved in the clinical trials for this vaccine and you can read more [here](#).

There was positive coverage in the [Guardian](#) this week on the efforts underway in our region, specifically by Newcastle GP Federation which you might be interested in reading. Just one example of the herculean efforts underway.

### **Push to vaccinate hard to reach staff groups**

We need a really big push to ensure we vaccinate all frontline health and social care workers by the end of this month - especially those that are hard to reach. Most staff will be vaccinated by their host employer but please remember we have developed an online platform for those staff where this is not the case or for those who are more difficult to reach, such as those who work across borders.

You can read more about it in a [letter](#) and [leaflet](#) from the Strategic Vaccination Operating Centre (SVOC). This makes clear that if an employer is already arranging an appointment staff should not register again, as it will not be quicker and will take away valuable appointments for other staff. Please do all you can to reach out to these groups of staff and encourage them to be vaccinated.

### **Captain Sir Tom Moore**

This week we are all incredibly saddened to hear of the passing of Captain Sir Tom Moore. He was a true inspiration to us all and won a place in all our hearts (and in our

NHS family) after raising almost £33 million for NHS charities.

We are already seeing the benefits of his legacy across our region with this money being used to improve care and facilities for our patients and staff. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this time, and all those who have lost loved ones during these difficult times.

### **Learning Disability Network launches new website**

Happy birthday to our North East and Cumbria Learning Disability Network which has launched its new website on its 10th anniversary, please do check it out. The network is a crucial part of our ambitions as an ICS to tackle health and social care inequalities faced by people with a learning disability. So, a huge thank you from me to everyone for their continued efforts to improve access to health and social care to enable people with a learning disability, and their families, to have a good quality of life. You can check out the [website](#) and follow them on twitter [@neclidnetwork](#)

### **Looking after our mental health**

Now more than ever we need to do all we can to help children and young people look after their mental health. We have been supporting **children's mental health week** across the region and there is also updated clinical guidance from NHS England which you can access [here](#) and [here](#).

It's also [time to talk day](#) today and we are all well aware that this continues to be a difficult time for many of our teams.

So just a reminder from me that support is available from the regional [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#). It's there for all health and care staff – including NHS, social care, and care home staff. It offers a confidential advice and support helpline staffed by highly skilled NHS psychological practitioners. The helpline is 0191 223 2030, seven days a week (including Bank Holidays) from 7am-9pm.

As always, thank you for all you are doing. Stay safe.

Best wishes,

Alan

**Alan Foster is the executive lead for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System**

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## **Other news and updates**

**The R number in the UK:** The latest reproduction number (R) and growth rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK can be found here on [GOV.UK](#).

**Public Health England dashboard:** The Public Health England (PHE) dashboard can be found [here](#). Daily reporting includes deaths that have occurred in all settings where there has been a positive COVID-19 test, including hospitals, care homes and the wider community. The report also includes case rates per 100,000 resident population at lower-tier local authority level.

**National flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports:** A link to the weekly national flu and COVID-19 report, monitoring COVID-19 activity, seasonal flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses can be found [here](#).

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North of England Commissioning Support Unit  
[NHC-TR.NENCCOVID19@NHS.net](mailto:NHC-TR.NENCCOVID19@NHS.net)

[MailPoet](#)