



COVID-19 Briefing



COVID-19 ICS update - 7 January 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](#).

Message from Alan Foster



It's been a busy start to 2021 to say the least and a lot has happened since I wrote to you just before Christmas. Firstly, can I say a huge thank you to everyone who was working over Christmas and New Year to care for our communities. I know things continue to be very busy for everyone so your continued support and dedication is much appreciated.

This week's [announcement](#) from the prime minister on a new national lockdown was very clear about the urgency of the steps needed to take to control the virus.

As you know, we have [particular pressures](#) in North Cumbria and some other areas within the region and we continue to work together to support each other, as we would normally, to ensure the best care for our communities. I know this will continue as we move through the challenging weeks ahead.

The next few days and weeks will be crucial for us. While we are very busy, we are coping thanks to everyone's hard work. We are expecting and planning for further increases in cases following the mixing at Christmas but it is too early to say whether we will have another wave as is being experienced so acutely in the south. Our thoughts are of course with colleagues there.

This is a critical time for us and is why we have, again, asked the public to work with us and to follow the rules to help stop the spread of the virus; as well as reassuring them that the NHS is here for them if they need us.

Both [ITV Tyne Tees](#) and BBC Look North broadcast an update on the situation for the NHS in our region and a plea to ask people to do their bit to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. I would like to thank our clinical lead Professor Chris Gray, executive director of nursing and midwifery at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Marion Dickson, nurse practitioner Emma Francis at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Northumberland GP [Dr Lily Lamb](#) and executive medical director Dr Jeremy Cundall, CCDFT, for taking part.

You may also be interested in reading [this statement](#) from leaders of the seven local authorities in the north east, which was issued in response to the news of the national lockdown.

COVID-19 vaccination

On a more positive note we are pulling out all the stops to roll-out the COVID-19 vaccination.

Our teams have been working hard over just three short weeks to deliver the Pfizer vaccine in hospital hubs, local GP-led services and care homes.

The approval of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine provides a major boost to our plans and we will continue to increase our capacity to deliver the vaccine with additional local vaccinations services, hospital hubs and vaccination centres which will be coming on-line over the coming weeks. With [exciting news](#) yesterday that a vaccination site will be opening at the Centre for Life in Newcastle next week.

The new guidance from the JCVI on the period between doses also means that we will be to get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time and will help save lives.

It's important to remember this will be a marathon, not a sprint and the hope nationally is to have the vaccine delivered to the priority groups identified by the JCVI by late Spring this year.

Our teams are doing an incredible job to deliver what it is the largest vaccination programme in our history, at the same time as continuing to be there for everyone who needs care. So, a big thank you to everyone involved.

I know GP practices are getting lots of enquiries so our key messages to the public are:

- please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you;
- when we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments;
- please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives

Supporting our teams

I'm very aware that another lockdown brings about a number of difficulties, both physically and mentally, so I would like to remind everyone that our colleagues at CNTW are offering psychological wellbeing support to staff across the whole North East and Cumbria health and care system. This is a confidential support line and it is also available to education, police, fire and prison service staff. For information on how to access the helpline, see [here](#).

As I have mentioned before, our ability to work together is a key strength for us all and this will continue to be the case as we move forward. It's important that we continue to look out for each other.

Best wishes,

Alan

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

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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