



COVID-19 Briefing



COVID-19 ICS update - 11 March 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



Covid-19 vaccines

This is certainly something to celebrate. Today, patient Claire Ripley at Station View Medical Centre in Bishop Auckland received the millionth vaccine given in the North East and North Cumbria. This is an amazing effort from everyone involved and is helping to save lives and keep our communities safe. You can read the full story [here](#).

The region is continuing to progress quickly with the majority of vaccinations being given through GP-led services working as part of primary care networks supported by

our four large vaccination centres in the region, and community pharmacies.

This has, and continues to be, a huge and combined team effort. Everyone in GP practices, primary care, clinical commissioning groups and hospitals – the thousands of NHS workers who moved on to the vaccination programme from other jobs. Our partners in the local councils from social care, public health, transport and planning. All our volunteers from the police, fire service, a huge range of community and voluntary organisations. Travel and transport partners, nexus, bus companies who are helping to make access to vaccination services as easy as possible.

Thank you to everyone.

Back to school

This week many young people returned to school which, as well as being a relief for many parents, is important for our children and young peoples' physical and mental wellbeing. I wanted to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our colleagues working in education, and in public health, for all they are doing to support our children and young people and keep them safe.

Keep doing your bit

This week for the first time in a long while the number of patients with COVID-19 in our hospitals dropped below 500 this week (sitting at around 350 at the start of this week). Which is really positive news.

But we can't be complacent. Earlier in the week we asked the public to keep doing their bit to support us as we move into spring and as we start to see some restrictions lifted over the coming weeks. You can read our release [here](#) which asks people to use services sensibly and think pharmacy, GP and 111 first.

It was great to hear colleagues Deepak Dwarakanath, medical director at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Julie Suckling emergency department service manager at South Tees NHS Foundation Trust on BBC Tees this week sharing this important message. There's also been some [coverage](#) in the other media on this too.

Supporting our staff and being a great place to work

The national NHS staff survey results are out today and you can view them [here](#). Congratulations to Northumbria Healthcare who have been rated by their staff as best acute and community trust.

This has been our toughest year-ever and unrelenting for our teams. The survey gives us all an opportunity to reflect on where we are doing well, and how we can improve so we can deliver our shared ambition to be a great place for people to work and ensure

they are supported.

Thank you, Professor Chris Gray

As many of you will know, Professor Chris Gray will be retiring at the end of March. Chris has been a fantastic clinical lead for our ICS, with nearly 40 years' experience working in the NHS, and he has led our clinical engagement work with great skill and insight. I am sure we will all want to thank Chris for his outstanding contribution, and wish him well in his retirement. I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Chris for all his dedication and support over the years.

I am delighted to announce that Professor Mike Bramble has agreed to join us as ICS medical director on an interim basis from the 1 April, until a permanent appointment can be made following further national guidance on ICS roles and responsibilities.

Professor Mike Bramble will be known to many of you as a distinguished consultant gastroenterologist and latterly Medical Director at South Tees NHS Foundation Trust. Mike retired from his full-time role at the trust but continued working within our region as designated secondary care doctor at Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) between 2013 – 2017, and has been a member of the Northern Clinical Senate for the last four years.

I am sure you will give Mike a warm welcome to our ICS and he is very much looking forward to working with you and your teams.

One year on

On March 23 it will be one year from when we were first put in a [national lockdown](#) and were asked to stay at home and protect the NHS.

I am sure we will all be taking some time to reflect on the year gone by and remember those that have lost loved ones and continue to be affected by the pandemic.

While the past year has been one of great sadness we should also reflect on the many things we have managed to achieve together and the compassion and kindness that has been shown by so many throughout this time.

Thank you everyone.

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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