



# COVID-19 Briefing



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## COVID-19 ICS update - 15 April 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



### Current picture in the region

The number of patients with COVID-19 in our hospitals continues to fall and this week, for the first time since September, it dropped below 100. Which is welcome news.

Our teams have all sacrificed so much over the last year and I would like to thank you all for your efforts in keeping our communities safe and driving down the rate of infection.

We are continuing to remind the public to stay safe and act sensibly as restrictions

ease as part of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. While it is great to see people enjoying time with friends and family we are asking them not to over-do it and stick to the rules.

Our frontline teams know only too well the impact alcohol has on the health and safety of our communities and the pressure this then puts on NHS services. Sadly, we also know this often leads to abuse of our staff too.

We have published this [animation](#) reminding the public that the virus is still here and that we all still need to follow the rules. Ahead of the weekend we will also be reminding our communities that they must enjoy themselves responsibly.

Our colleagues at North East Ambulance Service also shared this powerful [video](#) from frontline staff who have been abused, either verbally or physically, whilst at work. This is part of their 'more than a uniform' campaign which follows an increase in attacks on staff after lockdown measures were relaxed last summer. I would like to thank all of the staff members for coming forward and taking a stand against this unacceptable behaviour. This important message was also featured on ITV Tyne Tees this week which you can view [here](#).

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

Our vaccination programme continues to see our region delivering the highest cumulative number of vaccines delivered in the country and we have now offered the vaccine to everyone in cohorts 1-9. Figures [released today](#) show we have now delivered more than 1.9 million vaccines. I'd again like to thank everyone involved, you've all played a huge part in keeping our communities safe from this virus.

We are continuing to push out messaging on [social media](#) and on other channels to encourage people to take up the offer of a vaccine after a decline in those aged over 50 coming forward to book an appointment.

This week the vaccination programme was also extended to those aged over 45 which is great news. The Moderna vaccine roll-out started in England [this week](#), adding another vaccine to our armoury as we continue to fight this virus. The Moderna vaccine started being used in the Nightingale North East Vaccination Centre on Tuesday, one of 20 places in England to do so.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has issued their final guidance on phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. The statement confirmed the next phase of the vaccination programme will continue based on age, but recommended that local teams specifically target men, those who are obese, people from certain ethnic groups and those experiencing social deprivation to encourage take up. The statement also highlighted the 'exceptional efforts of the NHS, volunteers and community organisations' in making the vaccination programme a success. You can

read the full statement [here](#).

Vaccination services have reported that there has not been a big impact on public confidence in relation to the AstraZeneca vaccine and blood clots, with people still coming forward for their vaccination. All the key documents and publications in relation to this change in advice have now been updated and can be found [here](#).

A key part of the vaccination programme will be ensuring we enable all of our communities to have easy access to the vaccine and tackle any inequalities. All our local areas are working together across the NHS, social care and public health to target local communities that are not coming forward for their vaccine.

It was great to see our colleagues at Northumberland CCG and Cramlington Seaton Valley Primary Care Network have worked together to set up a Roving Vaccination Service to transport vaccines to rural parts of Northumberland. Staff from the Village Surgery in Cramlington will lead the team, who will be working from a specially modified transit van to help ensure that residents in remote communities and hard to reach groups are not left behind in the vaccination programme. You can read more about this [here](#).

Also North Cumbria CCG have some great examples of how they are focusing on patients with learning disabilities and homeless patients which you can read more about [here](#).

We are sharing a series of short videos to encourage people with severe mental illness to get their vaccines. They are available to view [here](#) and I would like to encourage you all to share these resources with your networks.

Please share with the regional programme further examples of the great work taking place across the region to tackle health inequalities and COVID vaccination [nuth.covidvaccinehubne@nhs.net](mailto:nuth.covidvaccinehubne@nhs.net).

### **COVID testing now available to everyone**

As I mentioned in last week's update, everyone in England, including those without symptoms, will now be able to take a free, rapid COVID-19 test twice a week.

Alongside the vaccine rollout regular testing is at the heart of plans to reopen society so this is something worth sharing far and wide. You can find out more [here](#).

Further good news on the testing front as a walk-through test centre has been launched in Washington to offer people showing signs of COVID-19 access to better testing. You can read more about this [here](#).

Thank you for all you are doing.

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

**Promoting safe behaviour and vaccine confidence during Ramadan:** Assets promoting safe behaviour and vaccine confidence this Ramadan are available to download [here](#). They will be added to the Campaign Resource Centre shortly. Please use this tracked link in social media posts: [bit.ly/VaccineInfoN](https://bit.ly/VaccineInfoN)

**Staff wellbeing - beyond the mask theatre shows:** These interactive theatre shows are part of our staff wellbeing hub's programme to support staff to stay mentally well during COVID-19. They are targeted at staff in hospitals, care homes and other settings that have been most affected by dealing with the pandemic and will be recorded for a short film that celebrates the dedication of staff throughout the past year. You can find out more information [here](#).

**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](https://www.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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