



COVID-19 Briefing



COVID-19 ICS update - 28 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



One year on

This Sunday it will be 12 months from when the first [COVID-19 patients](#) were cared for at Newcastle's High Consequence Infectious Diseases Unit. It's a poignant moment for us all.

So before updating you on recent developments and reflecting on the year gone by, I'm sure you will join me in remembering all those that have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and pay tribute to all our health and care teams, and other key workers, for all they

have done to keep people safe over the past year.

Although numbers of cases in the community are showing signs of slowing down, we know health and care services will remain very busy for some time to come; and it continues to be a difficult time for our teams.

This week we have also seen a small decrease in the overall number of COVID-19 hospital admissions when compared to last week which is promising. But there has been an increase in the number of people needing care in our intensive care units, a situation which we are monitoring very closely.

Reflecting on the year gone by

As a region we continue to pull together to fight this virus. While the last year has been one of great sadness it's worth reflecting on what we have achieved.

We have seen many services transformed to enable care to be provided differently and keep people safe – from the creation of GP red hubs to virtual consultations and [virtual wards](#).

Working together the region created its own sustainable supplies of PPE including the opening of the [Northumbria Manufacturing and Distribution Hub](#), which has gone from strength-to-strength and created more jobs for local people and is now producing millions of gowns.

Our teams have also delivered the biggest ever flu vaccination programme which is no mean feat in a pandemic, and a herculean effort is now underway across the region to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine.

This week saw the opening of our second vaccination centre at the [NHS Nightingale Hospital in Sunderland](#) and there are more planned for across the region. These will continue to complement the incredible work being carried out by local GPs in our primary care networks providing local vaccination services and by NHS staff in hospital hubs.

We continue to be at the forefront of science whether that's our involvement in the recovery trials at [North Tees](#) or the Integrated Covid Hub North East, which is the first of its kind in England and places the region at the forefront of managing the virus and also includes the new [lighthouse lab](#).

Our communities have supported us throughout – they've clapped, donated, volunteered and stayed home when we needed it the most. And the support of our workforce has been without doubt, unwavering.

There's many more stories and examples so my apologies that I cannot include

everything. But let's hold on to them as we reflect on the year gone by and move through 2021.

Support for our teams

I know many organisations have their own systems and programmes in place to support your staff but please remember we also have the regional [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#) to help health and care staff – including NHS, social care, and care home staff –with their mental and physical wellbeing when they need it. It offers a confidential advice and support helpline staffed by highly skilled NHS psychological practitioners from Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW). Health and care staff can call the **helpline on 0191 223 2030**, seven days a week (including Bank Holidays) from 7am-9pm. Please do share information about this service across your own channels and some resources will be circulated shortly to communication leads.

Vaccinations for hard to reach staff groups

As you will be aware we are aiming to vaccinate all frontline health and social care workers who live or work in the region by the end of this month. Most staff will be vaccinated by their host employer but we have developed an online platform for those staff where this is not for the case or for those who are more difficult to reach, such as those who work across borders. You can read more about it here in a [letter](#) and [leaflet](#) from the Strategic Vaccination Operating Centre (SVOC). This also 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.

Improving health and wellbeing

COVID-19 has brought to the forefront the many inequalities that exist in our society. As a system we have a clear ambition to tackle these and improve the health of our communities. So, I am delighted to be able to share with you the [latest update](#) from our Prevention Board which highlights some of the initiatives underway across the region to help us drive forward these plans.

As always, 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

Other news and updates

COVID-19 vaccination programme uptake

See [here](#) for information on the number of COVID-19 vaccinations provided by the NHS in England.

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

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