



COVID-19 Briefing



COVID-19 ICS update - 8 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](#).

Message from Alan Foster



Thank you

Firstly, can I say a huge thank you to everyone working over the Easter bank holiday - your continued support is much appreciated. It was a busy bank holiday across general practice, 111, urgent treatment centres and EDs and we are continuing to ask the public to use services wisely and act responsibly as restrictions start to be lifted.

Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine

I'm sure you've all seen the news this week surrounding the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has issued [advice to the government](#) on the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine, following reports of extremely rare blood clots in a very small number of people.

As I'm sure you will all appreciate, this is a fast-moving situation but it's important to remember that vaccines continue to be best way to protect people from COVID-19 and have already saved thousands of lives. Our message is that everyone should continue to get their vaccination when asked to do so, unless specifically advised otherwise.

By 31 March, 20.2 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine had been given in the UK, meaning the overall risk of these blood clots is approximately 4 people in a million who receive the vaccine.

This [letter](#) which has been circulated nationally outlines the next steps which are summarised below – although I recognise there is further detail behind this and also planning happening across the patch to support and react to this.

But in summary:

- **For anyone who has already received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine**, regardless of your age or underlying health condition, the advice is to continue to get your second dose. The second dose will be important for longer lasting protection against COVID-19.
- **For anyone over 30, who has not received their first AstraZeneca vaccine dose**, the advice is to get your vaccine as planned and keep your appointment if you have been given one.
- **Anyone under 30 - without an underlying health condition – who has not been vaccinated yet - will be offered an alternative vaccine via PCN sites.**
 - People may make an informed choice to receive the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to receive earlier protection – this may be appropriate for people such as carers, health and social workers and other front line staff who are at an increased risk of exposure and/or to reduce the risk of passing the virus on to vulnerable individuals.
- **Anyone under 30 – with an underlying health condition – who has not yet had a first vaccine - will be offered an alternative vaccine.**

There has also been new guidance on COVID-19 vaccination and blood clotting released which you can read [here](#). There is a Public Health England leaflet [here](#).

In other vaccine news, the roll-out of the Moderna vaccine began in the UK [this week](#), which is a welcome boost in our continued fight against the virus. Currently only one vaccination centre will have Moderna in the North East and North Cumbria.

With regard to our vaccination programme, we have now [delivered around 1.8 million vaccines](#). This remains the highest cumulative number of vaccines delivered in the country, something we should be incredibly proud of. Thank you to everyone involved, your work to help keep our communities safe during this time is very much appreciated.

We have seen a drop in the number of people aged over 50 accessing the large vaccination centres in our region so we are reminding those yet to come forward to [book their appointment](#). Please do share this important message among your colleagues and partner organisations.

Latest picture in the region

The number of patients with COVID-19 in our hospitals is continuing to fall, which I'm sure you'll all agree is welcome news. Currently we have around 100 patients in our hospitals with COVID-19, which is a significant drop-off compared to previous weeks.

With that in mind, we are all aware that we cannot be complacent, especially with measures easing on Monday 12 April as part of the Government's [roadmap out of lockdown](#).

We will be reminding people to stick to the rules and encouraging everyone to keep doing their bit to help reduce the spread of the virus. An updated animation will be released tomorrow and shared across the region.

COVID testing kits available to everyone

The government has announced that everyone in England will be able to access free rapid COVID-19 testing from 9 April. Alongside our vaccine rollout, regular testing is at the heart of plans to defeat the virus and reopen society. Around one in three people with the virus do not have symptoms so this will be a vital step in helping us to stop any outbreaks and getting us back to seeing our loved ones and doing the things we enjoy. More information can be read [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

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

New dedicated mental health services for new, expectant and bereaved mums:

Thousands of new, expectant or bereaved mothers will receive help and support for mental health problems through dozens of new dedicated hubs which are being set up across the country as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Read more [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://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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