

COVID-19 National Lockdown Reminder

Dear colleague,

We all have a part to play in helping to reduce the spread and avoiding close contact with others is critical in preventing transmission.

As government guidance states – you must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave your home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your [support bubble](#) or [childcare bubble](#) where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, **you should always stay local** – unless it is necessary to go further, for example to go to work if your job role does not allow you to work from home.

Stay local means stay in the village, town or part of the city where you live.

New guidance for schools

Last week the Department for Education (DfE) published its guidance, [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools](#) which set out its expectations for schools during this lockdown period.

The DfE guidance has clarified that early years provision in maintained nursery schools, nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites **should remain open** and continue to offer places where the parent wishes for their child to be able to attend.

The DfE guidance also specifies that special schools should continue to welcome and encourage pupils to attend full-time where the parent wishes for their child to be able to attend.

School places for vulnerable children and critical workers

In line with the latest DfE guidance – schools will be asking parents and carers who are critical workers **to keep their children at home if they can.**

We fully support that school or college is the best place to support children's education, wellbeing and development. We understand the pressure and anxiety families face when children are not in school or college as they have to balance work with care and education for their children, and are anxious about the long term impact on their child's education.

However, as we enter the third national lockdown, we are aware that **schools are experiencing significant demands for children to have a school place**. We are all aware that the Prime Minister announced that schools are a vector for transmission and therefore we are mindful of protecting schools to ensure we do not have levels of transmission which results in them being unable to remain open to any pupils.

We recognise that every school and college will have a different number of vulnerable children and children of critical workers. We have advised schools and colleges to speak to parents and carers to identify who needs to go to school or college.

Vulnerable children who would be safer in school or settings should be encouraged to attend.

We appreciate your understanding and support. These are challenging times for everyone involved and we hope that all children and young people will be able to return to school or college as soon as it is safe to do so. We will continue to work with the DfE to seek their advice and ensure they are aware of the challenges for both schools, colleges and families.

If you are having any difficulties obtaining a school or college place for a vulnerable child or as a critical worker, or have any queries about places, please email COVID19schoolplaces@cheshireeast.gov.uk. The Attendance Team will work with schools to resolve any issues.

If you have any queries about an early years place, please contact the Family Information Service at fis.east@cheshireeast.gov.uk or on 0300 123 5033.

Vaccination programme – the latest update

The NHS is planning to vaccinate everyone in the [top four priority groups](#) by mid-February 2021 – including older care home residents and staff, everyone aged over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

Cheshire's GP practices are working together to vaccinate people, so you might not be contacted by your usual practice and you might need to go to a different location for your vaccination – you will be told where to attend when you are invited in. We have 18 GP-led sites, three hospital hubs and a number of pharmacy-led sites to deliver the vaccine in Cheshire.

More information about the [programme to vaccinate frontline health and care workers in Cheshire is available here.](#)

Please don't worry if you have a family member who is over 80 but hasn't heard anything so far. GPs and other practices are working hard to vaccinate as many people in this groups as quickly as possible and, during January and February 2021, many more people will be invited in.

People most at risk from the complications of COVID-19 are being offered the vaccine first and [this guidance explains why we all have to wait our turn.](#)

For full details, the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group have developed a [COVID-19 vaccination question and answers document.](#)

People Helping People – volunteers needed

Our People Helping People service continues to be an essential lifeline for our vulnerable residents. So far, we have supported 3,928 people across the borough. The re-introducing of shielding for our clinically extremely vulnerable group has meant that 1,047 additional residents have contacted us since the November 2020 lockdown requesting support to meet needs around food, fuel or digital poverty or to support their mental health.

The People Helping People team are still recruiting volunteers to help with local tasks for vulnerable people so if you wish to be part of this fantastic initiative please [pledge your support using this online form](#) and a member of our team will be in touch.

Financial support over the winter months

As the cold weather is set to continue, we wanted to remind you of the support that is available for families who may be struggling with fuel costs.

As part of the [COVID winter grant scheme](#), and with the help of schools, colleges, early years settings and other family support services across the borough, we are distributing vouchers worth £880,000 on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions. The vouchers will support our most vulnerable children and families to pay for essentials such as food and energy during the winter months.

Now that so many of us are working from home, it may be a good time to consider how you can improve the energy efficiency of your home. There is a [lot of information on our website about help with heating your home](#), with tips to save you money on your fuel bills, which can also improve your health by making your home warmer too.

And don't forget, you may be able to claim tax relief for some of the additional bills you have to pay because you have been asked to work at home on a regular basis.

We have created a [step-by-step guide](#) to help you do this if you have not done so already.



Wellbeing – weekly check-up

As we start another week it might be helpful to take some time for a check-in.

How are you coping? What steps might you need to take to improve your mental and/or physical

wellbeing.

This wellbeing check-up produced by Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England poses some useful questions to ask yourself. Why not give a couple of them a try?

Taking some time just to pause and reflect, acknowledging what you are feeling and looking at what might help to reduce the feelings of stress or anxiety can help, maybe helping you to feel slightly more in control of your life and feelings.

Cheshire's COVID-19 vaccination programme - What you need to know

Vaccines are the way out of this pandemic. An effective vaccine is the best way to protect people from Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Following extensive trials, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines have been approved in the UK and the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme is underway in Cheshire. Keep updated via the NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group website here: <https://bit.ly/2LI4u65>

- [Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19 vaccinations in Cheshire](#)

Nationally, an independent group of experts (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) has recommended that the NHS first offers a vaccines to [those at highest risk of catching the disease and of suffering serious complications or dying from COVID-19.](#)

The NHS is planning to vaccinate everyone in the [top four priority groups](#) by mid February 2021 – including older care home residents and staff, everyone aged over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

How will I get my vaccine?

Cheshire's GP practices are working together to vaccinate people, so you might not be contacted by your usual practice and you might need to go to a different location for your vaccination – you will be told where to attend when you are invited in.

When it is your turn to book your vaccination you will need to provide:

- Your name and date of birth
- Your NHS number (which will be provided in your invitation letter)

If you've had your first vaccine dose already, the NHS will contact you when it's time for your second dose (within 12 weeks).

If you are unable to leave the house to travel to where you are offered an appointment and cannot arrange for someone to help you, your local NHS services will be in contact with you.

Please don't be worried if you or a family member is over 80 but hasn't heard anything so far. You might know others over 80 who have been invited for their vaccination already, but that does not mean that you or your relative are a lower priority.

GPs and other practice staff are working hard to vaccinate as many people in this group as quickly as possible and, during January and February 2021, many more people will be invited in. This is only the start of the vaccination programme and it will take some time to work through everyone.

People most at risk from the complications of COVID-19 are being offered the vaccine first. [This guidance explains why we all have to wait our turn.](#)

Where are vaccinations taking place in Cheshire?

GP-led vaccination services are up-and-running in the locations listed below.

Please do not attend any vaccination site seeking a vaccination without an appointment and do not contact your local hospital, GP practice or council to seek a COVID-19 vaccine appointment – appointments cannot be made in this way.

- Dene Drive Primary Care Centre, Dene Drive, Winsford, CW7 1AT
- Frodsham Leisure Centre, Princeway, Frodsham, WA6 6RX
- Waters Green Medical Centre, Sunderland Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 6JL
- City Walls Medical Centre, St Martins Way, Chester, CH1 2NR
- Neston Medical Centre, Liverpool Road, Neston, CH64 3RA
- Cheshire View, Plough Lane, Christleton, Chester, CH3 7PT
- Dental Suite in Eagle Bridge Health & Wellbeing Centre, Dunwoody Way, Crewe, CW1 3AW
- Kingsmead Medical Centre, 2 Kingsmead Square, Regency Way, Northwich, CW9 8UW
- Apollo Buckingham Health Sciences Campus Ltd, Library Building Crewe Campus
- Nantwich Civic Hall, 4 Market Street, Nantwich
- The 13 Club, Cedars Avenue, Alsager, Stoke on Trent, ST7 2PH
- Wilmslow Health Centre, Chapel Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5HX
- Congleton Town Hall, 7 High St, Congleton, CW12 1BN
- Knutsford District and Community Hospital, Bexton Road, Knutsford, WA16 0BT

In the week commencing January 11th 2021, further GP-led vaccination services are also scheduled to go live in the following locations, with exact go-live dates subject to a number of key operational considerations - including vaccine supply:

- Ellesmere Port Civic Hall
- St Columba's RC Church Hall, Chester
- Victoria Hall, Middlewich
- Civic Centre, Poynton

* Please note - We are extremely grateful for the number of vaccination venue offers we continue to receive, however, with 18 GP-led sites, three hospital hubs and a number of pharmacy-led sites, we do not currently require any further vaccination venues. Thank you.

Where else might I be invited to have a vaccine?

Hospital vaccination hubs are in place at the Countess of Chester Hospital, Leighton Hospital and Macclesfield Hospital and a number of pharmacy-led sites are also planned. Hospital and pharmacy sites are predominantly aimed at vaccinating frontline health and care workers.

More information about the programme to vaccinate frontline health and care workers is [available here](#).