

Covid community update – Thursday 19 August 2021

£30,000 for local organisations supporting families and vulnerable people

As part of Cambridgeshire County Council's Covid Local Support Grant, we have allocated £30,000 to a range of local organisations in South Cambridgeshire to support families in need of help over the summer months with food, fuel and other emergency supplies.

The educational charity [Cambridge Online has received a grant of £15,000 to support 105 families to get online](#), with devices, data packages and support – so please direct any residents in need of support to get online to Cambridge Online.

Other grant recipients include: Cambridge City Foodbank (£3,000 awarded to help expand the fresh food offer in Trumpington, Cambourne and Northstowe); Care Network (£1,000 awarded for its 'community navigator' and 'help at home' teams, which help people to continue to live independently); Age UK (£8,000 awarded to support older residents through the community warden scheme and to help to provide a fruit and veg service for older people); and smaller grants, which have been awarded to Parish Councils, local food networks, community food banks and Covid community groups.

COVID briefing from Jyoti Atri

Attached is a briefing on current COVID figures from Jyoti Atri, Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire, from Friday 13 August, showing that cases in South Cambridgeshire were at 299 per 100,000 population: an increase of 34% on the previous week. Hospitalisations are also rising across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and at the time of Jyoti's update, there were 84 patients in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough hospitals as a result of COVID and there were 11 deaths within 28 days of a positive COVID test in Cambridgeshire. As ever, the message remains to encourage everyone to have the vaccination as the evidence overwhelmingly shows that the vaccine is highly effective at breaking the link

between infections and serious illness. You can find the latest info on vaccination walk-in clinics and how to book appointments on [The Vaccinators website](#).

Changes to self-isolation

From 16 August, people who are double jabbed or aged under 18 are no longer legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as having close contact with a positive COVID-19 case. If identified as close contacts by NHS Test and Trace, they are now advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible to confirm whether or not they have the virus (and for variants of concern). People can order a PCR home test online, by calling 119, or going to a test site. Double-jabbed people identified as close contacts are advised to consider other precautions such as wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces, and to limit contact with other people, especially with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable. They are not be required to self-isolate while they wait for the results of the PCR test. Find out more via the [Government website](#).

Vaccine update for 12 to 17 year-olds

All 16-17 year-olds in England are to be offered a first vaccination dose by 23 August ahead of the new school year. They will be invited by text and letter to book through GPs, or they can visit **some** walk-in centres. NHS England has launched [a new online walk-in site finder to help 16 and 17-year-olds locate the nearest available centre](#) as not all centres are offering the vaccine to this age group. Teenagers within three months of turning 18 can also [book vaccine appointments online](#).

Children aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 or who live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus are being contacted by the NHS and invited to have their vaccine by 23 August. **Please note:** locally the CCG is still in the process of finalising details about how this cohort will be able to access the vaccine; the best place to check for the most up-to-date information is on [the CCG website](#).

Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread

On 11 August the Government added an [easy-read version of guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19](#), following the rules for England changing from 19 July.

Guidance for people who are caring (unpaid) during the pandemic – update

On 23 July, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) updated the [guidance for people who are caring, unpaid, for friends or family during the coronavirus outbreak](#) to reflect the lifting of restrictions as part of step four of the roadmap.

Guidance for people who have a disability or are more vulnerable to COVID-19

[Guidance is available here for people who have a disability or are more vulnerable to COVID-19](#). This outlines some voluntary extra steps that people in these groups, and those helping them, can take to reduce the risk of getting the virus. This includes information on how to access support from local councils and NHS volunteer responders. It also shows how to download optional badges which show that a person has a hidden disability or that additional support may be needed.

Thank you again for all your support.

Best wishes

Bill Handley

Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Here follows a briefing on current COVID figures from Jyoti Atri, Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire,

Dear Councillor,

Since my last update two weeks ago, rates of Covid-19 across Cambridgeshire have risen sharply and they are now approaching levels seen in the winter peak. At the time of writing, they are 305.4 cases per 100,000 population, which is a 33% increase on the same time last week and means the county is currently placed 74th nationally among UTLAs with the highest the number of cases across all ages.

These rates are higher than the national average which is 299.2 cases per 100,000 population, and the regional average which is 261.4 per 100,000.

Looking across the districts, there has been a rise in every area, and I can give you latest data for each patch:

Cambridge – 435.8 per 100,000, an increase of 33% on last week

East Cambs – 307.2 per 100,000, an increase of 50.5% on last week

South Cambs – 298.9 per 100,000, an increase of 34% on last week

Fenland – 228.3 per 100,000, an increase of 54.4% on last week

Huntingdonshire- 263.2 per 100,000, an increase of 14.9% on last week

Hospital admissions have continued to increase. There are currently 84 patients in hospitals across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a result of Covid and there have been 11 deaths within 28 days of a positive Covid test in Cambridgeshire.

At the moment, the number of people in hospital and dying from Covid locally is lower than the last time rates were this high. This is because infections rates are highest among young people, who are at lower risk as well as the protection being offered through the vaccine. However, this is now starting to affect our over 60's, which is concerning.

Therefore, we need to get as many people as possible double vaccinated against Covid-19, as evidence shows that the vaccine is highly effective at breaking the link between infections and serious illness, driving down hospitalisations and deaths.

In parts of Cambridgeshire - Cambridge in particular - the numbers who have been vaccinated are lower than we would like, despite extensive work with our communities. Three quarters of people nationally have now had both doses, whereas in Cambridgeshire, 79.5 per cent of eligible people have had one dose and 67.4 per cent have had both. In Cambridge it is much lower, with 63.8 per cent having first dose and 48 per cent having had both doses.

We have been working tirelessly with the CCG and many community groups and organisations to urge those more hesitant to come forward and get their vaccine. Our community engagement teams have been out and about working with people in harder to reach areas, to provide advice, support and answers to questions that they may have about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

We are also working with the CCG to see if there is anything more we can do to support people who have not yet been vaccinated – such as providing information, transport or support through other practical measures.

This week the Government also announced that 16 and 17-year-olds can now be vaccinated and we are urging people in these age groups to take up the offer. I have attached a toolkit produced by the CCG which it would be great if you could run on your own social media channels. It's really important that we get as many people as possible in this age group vaccinated before the start of the new school year in September.

People can also visit the many walk-in and pop-up clinics around the county, with more dates and locations available every week. Up-to-date details can be found at www.thevaccinators.co.uk

We have also launched our 'Half a Job Done' campaign on social media, which urges people to complete the job and have both doses of the vaccine. Don't forget, you can now have your second dose eight weeks after your first. I have attached a toolkit for this campaign too, in case you are able to help share the messages.

The county council is running messages from both toolkits, and more, so it may be easier for you to just share or like these messages.

In other news, the rules around self-isolation for close contacts are due to change from Monday (16 August). From this date, instead of self-isolating, those who are double jabbed and under 18s identified as close contacts of positive Covid-19 cases are advised to get a free PCR test as soon as possible. This applies to people who have received their final dose of the vaccine at least 14 days prior to contact with a positive case.

Those not fully vaccinated will still need to isolate if they are contacts, and everyone will still have to isolate if they test positive, to protect themselves and others, irrespective of their vaccination status or age in order to break onwards chains of transmission.

As double jabbed people identified as close contacts are still at risk of being infected, people are advised to consider other precautions such as wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces, and limiting contact with other people, especially with anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable. They will not be required to self-isolate while they wait for the results of the PCR test.

Meanwhile anyone who develops Covid-19 symptoms should self-isolate and get a PCR test and remain in isolation until the result comes back.

Our Communications Team is sharing messages about all of this and more, so please support us by sharing information with your family, friends and people in your ward.

Kind regards,

Jyoti Atri

Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire