

COVID community update – 3 December 2021

In light of the recent news of a new strain of the coronavirus (Omicron) I, once again, urge you to help us by speaking to your local networks to encourage as many people as possible to take up their vaccinations. Cases of the new variant will inevitably grow, and we already have a reported case in the district. More information on this is below.

It is fair to say that the vaccination programme, and national announcements as to who is eligible, move very fast and I would say that the information I am relaying is correct at the time of writing but it is always best to check the [NHS website](#) to make sure that you have the latest information. For now, the gap between a second vaccine and a booster is still 6 months and, although we have heard from Government that this period is likely to be reduced, this remains the rule at the time of writing. To help cope with the surge, walk-in boosters, have been paused across Cambridgeshire while capacity is ramped up over the coming weeks.

The news of the new variant has led to a lot of people trying to access boosters and sessions have been very busy; please call to book your vaccination or booster on the [NHS website](#) or by calling 119. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough [Vaccinators on Tour website](#) is updated frequently and has the latest information about sessions.

Omicron case confirmed in South Cambridgeshire

On Wednesday afternoon, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) [confirmed that a case of the Omicron COVID-19 variant has been detected in South Cambridgeshire](#) bringing the total number in England to 22. Our public health colleagues at Cambridgeshire County Council have confirmed that the subject is isolating, and they are working with the UKHSA to identify all of their recent close contacts so that they can self-isolate.

Here is the full statement from Cambridgeshire's Director of Public Health, Jyoti Atri: "We are working closely with UKHSA to identify any close contacts of the confirmed case who has recently returned to the UK from an area where Omicron is circulating. We are providing support and advice to make sure that they are self-isolating appropriately while their PCR tests are carried out. Omicron is a variant that we are concerned about as we need to understand how much protection the current vaccines offer against this variant if it is more transmissible or has a worse effect on people than the current variants. Scientists are

currently studying the virus and we will know more in the coming weeks. Protective measures - such as compulsory face coverings in public indoor spaces such as shops and public transport, and new regulations for people returning from abroad - are being put in place to buy time, while we learn more about this variant and while the booster vaccination programme is extended. So please make sure that that you observe these measures, and if you haven't done so already, you have had your initial two vaccinations. Please also book your booster as soon as you are eligible, as this remains the best protection for you, people you love and the wider community. www.thevaccinators.co.uk has all the available venues and times across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and is being regularly updated with new sites and times as they become available.”

Transport to vaccinations

Please remind any resident who is having difficulties with transportation to a vaccination/booster centre, that help and support is available to them via the Cambridgeshire County Council Covid Support Hub – they can either fill out the online form under the transport section on [this webpage](#) or call [03450 455219](tel:03450455219) (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm), and someone will help make their journey happen

Household Support Fund

Cambridgeshire County Council is working with us and other partners to help provide additional financial support to those in urgent need this winter. The support is available due to a government [Household Support Fund](#) grant. This grant follows the national Winter Support Grant last year and aims to help vulnerable people and families who need extra support during the pandemic.

People can access the fund if they earn less than £17,940 per year **or** are in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit

The fund will help gain practical support with:

- Food and essential supplies
- Paying for gas, electricity, oil or water in your home
- Other essential supplies, such as repairs to your boiler to help keep you and your family warm

Please help us ensure people are aware of this additional support. They can fill in a form to access support on [Cambridgeshire County Council's website](#) or call 03450 455219 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

Money from the fund has also been allocated to provide top up food vouchers for school holiday periods to all children who normally receive a free school meal.

If anyone needs further help or advice please ask them to contact duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone who would be interested and/or find it useful.

As always, we will be in touch when we have more information to share. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes,
Bill

Bill Handley
Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing
South Cambridgeshire District Council

16:30 on 3rd December 2021