

Stakeholders Briefing 16 July 2021

From: Cllr Amanda Hopgood (amanda.hopgood@durham.gov.uk)

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Our current seven-day infection rate stands at 759.7 cases per 100,000 which continues to be above the England average of 360.1 per 100,000. These are the highest rates we have seen and there is a similar picture across our region. However, we must temper this with the positive vaccine take up across County Durham, the age range of those testing positive, as well as lower hospital admissions and Covid-related deaths. For the latest data in County Durham and your local area, please visit our [Covid dashboard](#).

We do expect to see further increases in our seven-day infection rate as restrictions are lifted from Monday (19 July) and we all have a part to play in keeping our communities safe. It is also important that we continue to be cautious in how we make the most of the relaxed restrictions.

We encourage and recommend the use of face coverings and social distancing in council buildings. This is to help people protect each other and our staff so we can maintain service delivery.

We would also advise that everyone continues to meet in well-ventilated areas where possible; wear a face covering where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet, particularly in enclosed or crowded spaces; regularly wash your hands or use hand sanitiser; stay at home if you are unwell to reduce the risk of passing on other illnesses; and, consider individual risks, such as clinical vulnerabilities and vaccination status. It is also important to note that if you have symptoms of coronavirus or test positive, you must continue to self-isolate and book a PCR test. This is vital to limit the increase in infections.

The full details of Government plans, including the removal of limits on social contact, legal requirements for face coverings, working from home guidance and limits on numbers at weddings, funerals, concerts and sports events are available in the [Covid response: Summer 2021](#) document. The latest local coronavirus information and guidance can also be found at www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Vaccinations

GP surgeries, community pharmacies, pop-up sites and mobile vaccination units continue to offer vaccines to adults across County Durham. So far, more than 88 per cent of our eligible population aged

over 16 have received their first dose of the vaccination and more than 67 per cent have received both doses.

We have received Government guidance about a third booster vaccination, which is to be given in the Autumn. This sets out the priority groups and proposes linking the flu and Covid vaccines together, however, we are expecting further advice on the clinical administration of both vaccinations. County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust has been asked to lead the vaccination of health and social care staff, with the council and trust working together to deliver the vaccines, as with the first and second doses. We also continue to work with Durham University to vaccinate students who will remain in the county during the summer.

Other news

This week, Government Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility, Lord Callanan, visited Seaham Garden Village, as part of a tour of projects which are leading the way in the nation's drive to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions. It is hoped the Garden Village scheme, which will supply low carbon geothermal heat from former coal mines, can be duplicated across the UK coalfields.

The Durham City Run Festival has returned for the first time since 2019, helping to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of residents in County Durham. Organised by Events of the North, in partnership with Durham University and supported by ourselves, the festival, which involves three days of running themed events for the whole family, will draw to a close tomorrow at Durham Racecourse.

More than 100 free activities with healthy food will be on offer over the summer holidays as part of our Fun and Food programme. The project, which we are delivering with support from our 14 AAPs and a £2.3 million grant from the Department for Education, aims to support families who may struggle over the holidays. For more information, visit [our website](#) or call the Families Information Service on 03000 269995.

And, award-winning national influencer, Mini Travellers, will be spending three days the county next week as part of Visit County Durham's ongoing staycation campaign.

I will continue to keep everyone up to date throughout these changing and challenging times. Information is available on the council's website at www.durham.gov.uk and our social media channels www.facebook.com/DurhamCouncil and www.twitter.com/DurhamCouncil.

Cllr Amanda Hopgood

Leader

Durham County Council

For the latest government advice on the coronavirus pandemic, visit (www.gov.uk/coronavirus). Updates on changes that may affect our area can be found at www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Public Health England communication materials (posters and social media images) are available for all partners and can be accessed at <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>.

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