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Everyone at Warwick Bridge School wishes you well.

Covid-19 update

This week's [COVID-19 situation update](#) has been published and is available at www.cumbria.gov.uk/stopthespread

Cumbria has experienced its worst week so far for new COVID-19 infections, with 3,489 people testing positive in the week ending 8 January - a 39% rise on the previous week.

Infection rates are high across the county, especially in Carlisle where the infection rate was 1,151 per 100,000 population.

Hospitals remain under intense pressure, particularly in the north of the county where there has been a 63% increase in the number of COVID-19 patients since last week. There are now around 270 people being treated in north Cumbrian hospitals.

Sadly, a further 59 people have died from COVID-19 in the seven days to 12 January. This brings the total number of COVID-19 deaths in Cumbria since the start of the pandemic to 833.

Colin Cox, Cumbria's Director of Public Health has reacted to the figures by saying:

"We remain in an extremely serious situation. In the very latest provisional data, there are some early signs that the rate of increase in new infections may be slowing, but the infection rate is still very high.

"Even if that trend continues, we can expect the very high numbers of people requiring hospital care, and increasing deaths, to continue for some weeks. This is putting our local NHS system under intense pressure.

"I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is that we all follow the lockdown rules. The virus spreads when people come into contact, we must do everything we can to stop unnecessary contact with other people. Where being in contact with others is unavoidable, keep your distance, wear a mask, wash your hands - it does make a difference."

Vaccine update

The covid vaccination programme across Cumbria is gathering pace. All of the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in north Cumbria - groups of GP practices working together in a local area - are now delivering the vaccine. Eight PCNs and their teams are delivering the vaccine from nine sites.

You can see more information about this at <https://northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/covidvaccine>

Vaccinations - mainly to frontline health and care workers - are also being delivered at hospital hubs at the West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven, The Furness General in Barrow, the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle and the Royal Lancaster Infirmary.

The top two priority groups are:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults.
- All those 80 years of age and over and health and social care workers.

Key messages for our community:

1. Please do NOT contact your GP Practice - they will contact you when they are ready.
2. This is just the start of the rollout and it will take some time to go through even the first two cohorts. Please be patient.

The PCNs are now working with their care homes. This is being made much easier by the rollout of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine which has started to arrive and is being used.

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- It's also been [announced](#) that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised the third coronavirus vaccine for the UK, developed by Moderna.
- The [government has published](#) the UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan. The [vaccines delivery plan](#) sets out how the government will work with the NHS, devolved administrations, local councils and the armed forces to deliver the vaccination programme. The plan is for two million vaccinations to take place per week with over 2,700 vaccine sites across the UK.
- Some advice on what to expect after the first [COVID-19 vaccination is here](#).

COVID Vaccine Leaflets and Resources

The NHS has produced a very useful suite of [leaflets and resources](#) in relation to COVID vaccinations. Every Primary Care Network (PCN) across north Cumbria is now delivering the covid vaccine to their over 80s and care home residents and staff.

There are eight PCNs - they are groups of GP Practices working together in local areas - and the vaccine is now being delivered from nine locations. Please don't call your GP Practice to ask about the covid vaccine.

- Brampton and Longtown PCN - Brampton Community Centre.
- Carlisle Healthcare PCN - North Carlisle Medical Practice.
- Carlisle Network PCN - Morton Surgery.
- Cockermouth and Maryport PCN - Castlegate and Derwent Surgery (Cockermouth Community Hospital) and Maryport Rugby Club.
- Copeland PCN - Flatt Walks Surgery.
- Eden PCN - Penrith Hospital.
- Keswick and Solway PCN - Wigton Hospital.
- Workington PCN - Orchard House Surgery.

The teams are also visiting local care homes and the homes of housebound patients and those with mobility issues, to ensure our most vulnerable residents get the vaccine.

Their practices have been delivering the Pfizer vaccine and last week received their first delivery of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine.

Help is here

Help and emergency support is available through the Support Helpline. This include basic food and essential items, or if anyone is struggling to cope with your current situation for whatever reason. Call the Support Helpline on 0800 783 1966 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm).

Also email COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk and receive a response within one working day.

Helpful online support is also available at www.cumbria.gov.uk for those staying at home because of Coronavirus. Use the service to find volunteer groups and other services in their local area who can help them cope. Simply enter the location/postcode and tick a box with what they require help with, information and contact details for that locality are displayed, alongside the help available.

There's also a comprehensive alphabetical list of mental health and wellbeing charities throughout the county, plus an interactive map which helps find local support who can offer advice and help - including obtaining essential food and medicine supplies, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Community testing: a guide for local delivery

The Community Testing Programme enables councils with a high prevalence of coronavirus to give tests to those who are asymptomatic. With almost one in three individuals not displaying symptoms when infected with coronavirus, this is vital to identify and isolate positive cases, helping to reduce prevalence.

During the current period of national restrictions, the Community Testing Programme will be extended to all councils across England, not just those that had been prioritised based on the tier system.

While participating councils will continue to have flexibility to target plans to reflect local priorities and the local epidemiological picture, the government is encouraging councils to prioritise testing for those people who are permitted to leave home for work, including essential voluntary work, and who are unable to access asymptomatic testing through other routes.

Are you offering lifts to neighbours for vaccination appointments? (see attachment 4)

ACT has worked with Cumbria County Council to produce guidance for GP's needing info on organising lifts to vaccination appointments. As part of this we are sharing information on how to keep yourself safe if you are offering lifts. The Community Transport Association have a very helpful briefing, which is for CTA providers but contains useful info for individuals

here: <https://ctauk.org/covid19-guidance/#supporting-passengers>

The longer guidance from government is here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>.

Cumbria County Council and Community Transport groups are providing some support if you know of people who are struggling. You can contact Katy Wood at Cumbria County Council on: 0333 240 6965* option 5 * Please note this number is only available in working office hours.

The full guidance is attached above.

Action Fraud: Vaccines

Action Fraud is [warning the public](#) to remain vigilant as criminals begin to take advantage of the roll out of the coronavirus vaccine to commit fraud.

- The vaccine is free of charge.
- The NHS will never ask you for your bank account or card details.
- The NHS will never ask you for your PIN or banking password.
- The NHS will never arrive unannounced to your home to administer the vaccine.
- The NHS will never ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips.
- If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up.
- If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk
- Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number 7726, which is free of charge.
- If you believe you are the victim of a fraud, please report this to Action Fraud as soon as possible by calling 0300 123 2040 or visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk

Visiting remains suspended across all NHS sites

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Visiting remains suspended across all the NHS Trust sites, this is in order to maintain the highest level of infection prevention to help keep patients and staff safe.

If loved ones would like to bring in belongings to someone who is a patient, they MUST leave them with the dedicated volunteers at the two acute sites or leave with reception at the community sites.

Members of the public should not be taking belongings to the wards.

Please consider other ways of keeping in touch with your family and friends, such as phone calls and video calls on tablets. All patients in hospitals have access to free Wi-Fi so they can keep in touch with family and friends.

The exceptions to visiting are as follows:

- Patients who are receiving end-of-life care.
- Birthing partners in maternity units.
- Parents or legal guardians in the children's unit.

Additionally, if there are exceptional clinical or social reasons why someone wants to visit this will be decided on a case-by-case basis and we would urge people to liaise directly with the senior nurse on the ward. Visitors must be immediate family members or carers only.

Visiting arrangements in care homes and for visiting out of the care home

The government has [updated the guidance](#) on visiting arrangements in care homes and for visits out of the care home, to reflect the new national restrictions.

Ask for ANI – Domestic Abuse

Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) is a codeword scheme developed by the Home Office to provide a discreet way for victims of domestic abuse to signal that they need emergency help from the safety of their local pharmacy.

The scheme launched yesterday across the UK. Victims of domestic abuse will be able to use the codeword ANI in participating pharmacies (including all Boots stores and participating independent pharmacies) to let staff know that they require an emergency police response or help contacting a helpline or specialist support service.

Locally, Cumbria Police have contacted almost every pharmacy in the county, particularly in rural towns and communities and they have all indicated they will sign up to the scheme. The list of participating pharmacies will be continually updated and they will all display the poster within their premises to let customers know that they can approach their staff to seek help. Any information shared will be treated confidentially.

When a victim uses the codeword or asks for help, the member of staff will offer to accompany the individual to the consultation room. They will then check whether the victim wants the police to be called. If so, the staff member will offer the use of a phone to dial 999 or make the call on the victim's behalf.

Asymptomatic testing to be rolled out across the country

The [government has announced](#) that rapid, regular testing for people without symptoms of coronavirus will be made available across the country from this week, with the eligibility of the community testing programme expanded to cover all councils.

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Shielding

The government has updated the [guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable \(CEV\) during the national lockdown in England](#). An update pack sent to councils included [a copy of the letter sent to all CEV people providing formal shielding notification](#); a Q&A document on lines for employers, and guidance and Q&A for councils. The government has advised that shielding will remain in place **until 21 February**.

Business update

The government have introduced a series of grant schemes to support businesses who have been ordered to close or have been severely impacted by restrictions in response to Coronavirus. There are several grant schemes available for businesses under different tier and national lockdown periods.

We are doing everything to simplify the process for local business owners, including where possible automated payments based on any previous applications.

We have created a flowchart on our website in order to set out the grant schemes (a PDF version is attached). We are advising businesses to follow our social media pages and check for updates on <https://www.carlisle.gov.uk/news-and-events/business-support>

A Buy Local Carlisle scheme that aims to support local businesses has also been launched following government funding support.

Using funding allocated to us through the Reopening High Streets Safety European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the £24,000 scheme will provide help to local businesses.

Working with local businesswoman, Michelle Masters to deliver the project, it will continue the ongoing free support made available through the established Small Business Support Group Carlisle Facebook. This was set up by Michelle in May last year.

The Facebook group already has over 3,700 members and promotes business to business support.

The funding will also be used to provide business mentoring support and the development of a local business directory.

Buy Local Carlisle is split into two parts, the first part went live before Christmas and consists of three hours of business support/help from a qualified and experienced business advisor.

The second part will go live in the next few weeks and include a new dedicated website and business directory.

- For more information on the mentoring programme, visit <https://www.carlisleambassadors.co.uk/projects/business-support-programme/buy-local-mentor-application>
- Businesses can join the Facebook Small Business Support Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/smallbusinesssupportcarlisle>
- Membership for Carlisle Ambassadors is free until April this year. Find out more at <https://www.carlisleambassadors.co.uk/membership/become-a-member>

Cumbria LEP update

Information and Support for Businesses:

- Business support from CLEP: [click here](#)

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- Government Business Support Finder: Find coronavirus financial support for your business: [click here](#)
- Grants and External Funding in the Carlisle area: [click here](#)
- Community projects urged to apply for Sellafield funding (Copeland and Allerdale areas): [click here](#)

EU Exit News and Guidance:

- The UK Transition: Guidance for employees, employers and businesses: [click here](#)
- EU Exit Business Support Line: 0800 998 1098
- Sign up for BEIS business readiness bulletins: [click here](#) and see latest edition [below](#)
- Help is on hand from CLEP's EU Transition team: [click here](#)
- Check How to Export Goods and Trade with the UK tools: [click here](#)

Grants update

A new Sports Group Hardship fund has been set up by Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council.

Many sports groups have had a difficult time running regular activities as a result of restrictions to manage Coronavirus, resulting in a lack of income and fewer resources.

The Joint Sports Hardship Fund aims to support Carlisle community based not-for-profit sporting organisations that are facing financial hardship and possible closure.

- Find out more at <http://bit.ly/HardshipInfo>
- Criteria: <http://bit.ly/HardshipCriteria>
- Application: <http://bit.ly/HardshipApply>

Live streaming of funeral services - update

Carlisle Crematorium is now able to provide live streaming (webcasts) of funeral services.

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic this service will be free of charge.

We have sent an update and information on how to access the service to local funeral directors. The service will be supplied by Wesley Media.

Advice on accessing green spaces safely

The government has [updated the guidance](#) for using green spaces safely to reflect the new national restrictions that came into force in England on 6 January.

Members of the public should minimise the time spent outside their home, but can leave their home to exercise. This should be limited to once per day, and they should not travel outside their local area.

You can exercise in a public outdoor place:

- By yourself.
- With the people you live with.
- With your support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one).

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- In a childcare bubble where providing childcare.

Or, when on your own, with one person from another household

Moving home

The government has announced that the housing market in England will remain open during this national lockdown. This means that people looking to move home will be able to continue with planned moves and be able to view properties to move into in the future and that estate and letting agents will be able to continue working. [Guidance](#) has been updated to provide important public health information to ensure that moving home and related activities, such as viewings.

International travel update

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, Rt Hon Robert Courts MP, has [announced](#) that the government will be introducing pre-departure testing requirements for all inbound passengers to England from 4am on 15 January.

Passengers arriving by ship, plane or train will have to take a test up to three days before departure and provide evidence of a negative result before they travel.

This will be an additional requirement that applies to all passengers, including those travelling from a travel corridor country, other than those on a very short list of exemptions.

Rough sleepers and renters

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick has [announced](#) that the ban on bailiff evictions has been extended until at least 21 February.

Places of worship and special religious services and gatherings

The government has [updated the guidance](#) on the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic.

Guidance for landlords and tenants

The government has [updated the guidance](#) for landlords and tenants in the private and social rented sectors to explain the possession action process in the county courts in England and Wales.

This includes information to reflect the new national restrictions that came into force in England on 6 January and the extension of measures to prevent the enforcement of evictions in England and Wales, and to provide information about how these operate.