

“Case rates are rising again so act sensibly now to keep you and your family safe and help NHS over Winter... Get your jab now.”

- Case numbers across the county are rising, and Devon is now around the national average. The highest rates are in the 10 to 15 year old age group, and we are now seeing a rise in older working adults, likely to be the parents of this age group.
- Numbers of Covid patients in local hospitals has risen over recent weeks, although deaths remain stable
- Vaccination programme continues, with third jabs for immuno-supressed and booster jabs for over 50s. Eligible people are being encouraged to book an appointment to receive their jab. Vaccinations for healthy 12-15 year olds is being rolled out and soon people will be able to book their vaccination online and access local vaccination centres.
- Concerns remain about ongoing pressure across whole health and social care system with concern over likely impact of flu and other respiratory illnesses during autumn/winter
- Devon’s previous status as an area for enhanced government support (ERA) ended earlier this month. Schools are still advised to continue to encourage the wearing of face coverings in communal areas.

Key Public health messages:

People should continue to be cautious and follow basic public health advice on regular testing, self-isolation if symptomatic, and hands, face, space, etc. and avoid close contact indoors where possible.

Vaccination (for both Covid and Flu) is seen as key to the continued return to normality and limiting pressure on health and care services. Other actions will be considered if a rise in case numbers or the impact of cases in an area becomes significant or of concern.

Uptake among unvaccinated groups is being encouraged, with targeted work to encourage residential home care workers in particular. Booster jabs for over 50s and the role out of vaccinations for healthy 12-15 year olds are underway.

Other key messages

Hospitals and health service

- Hospitals admissions for Covid have risen, and are adding to extreme pressures already being faced by hospitals
- The Ambulance Service and Emergency Departments however continue to be under pressure

Mass vaccination

- Booster vaccinations have begun for those who are most vulnerable to Covid-19.
- All healthy 12-15 year olds will be offered a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine, to be given at school or soon via a local vaccinations centre.
- Parents, guardians or carers will be asked for consent in line with existing school-based vaccination programmes
- 6 in 10 18-24 year olds in Devon are now fully vaccinated?

Care Homes and vulnerable people

- Rates among older people are relatively low generally, with some isolated instances of outbreak. However, the whole care sector continues to be under pressure
- Previous vaccination programme highly effective with high take up among older people and staff but concerns over long term effectiveness mean winter booster programme now being rolled out
- Care providers' data (as of 19 October) shows that in Devon, 97% of care home residents and 94% of care home staff have received their second dose of the Covid vaccination.

Schools and education

- Despite higher case rates among school-age population, school attendance is higher than the England average
- Increase in positive cases amongst secondary school-age pupils, in particular the 10 to 15 year old age group.
- Schools are putting in place additional measures to try and reduce the risk of transmission within school including enhanced testing.
- Vaccination programme now being offered to all 12-15 years olds, to be administered through schools or soon via a local vaccinations centre.
- Some concern remains over schools being a target for anti-vax activity

Local Community Testing and Contact Tracing

- Targeted promotional activity with national support in areas of concern regarding vaccine uptake (in Ilfracombe and Exeter), went very well. We are now looking at the public feedback from that activity to inform our plans.
- The new programme of targeted mobile community testing and vaccination is continuing, jointly with NHS Devon colleagues.