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## **Public Health COVID-19 Update: Stakeholder Briefing**

21<sup>st</sup> January 2021



### **The situation in Plymouth: latest update**

We are now in a third national lockdown in order to help control the spread of COVID-19. The rates in Plymouth are still rising and our rate is the highest that it has ever been, despite having been in lockdown now for two weeks.

You will have heard of the new variant of COVID-19. The patterns that we are seeing in our COVID-19 cases at the moment make me very concerned that we are seeing the effects of the new variant.

In previous lockdowns we have seen Plymouth's case rate fall dramatically; this time it might be harder, but if we carry on doing the things we should, we hope to see this happen again. Plymouth has done some great work previously and we can all work together once more to control COVID-19 in our city and protect our NHS throughout the difficult winter months.

The control measures are the same for the variant, but because it transmits even more easily it is vital to keep going and stick with the rules.

- Keep your distance
- Wear your mask
- Wash your hands
- Exercise outdoors
- Stay at home as much as possible

### **COVID-19 vaccine**

The vaccine does present the light at the end of the tunnel: the NHS has been rolling it out across the city, contacting those in the priority groups to receive their vaccination. The NHS will contact you when it is your turn to have the vaccination so do not worry if you have not been contacted - you will hear soon. And please – leave phone lines and emails / inboxes free for emergency enquiries.

We have many offers of community spaces in order to help deliver these vaccines, so we have passed these to the NHS officers in charge of coordinating the vaccine rollout. We would like to thank everyone who has offered a space for this all important part in our fight against COVID-19.

The vaccine offers important protection against COVID-19 and while it has been developed much quicker than most vaccines, all safety steps been met. The vaccines are similar to some that had been previously developed for other viruses, meaning researchers had a head start by being able to adapt similar vaccines to work against COVID-19. In addition the threat and global impact of the virus meant that pharmaceutical companies and governments from all over the world have united

in finding effective ways of defeating the virus. Ultimately, funding and legislative hurdles that usually slow vaccine development have been overcome more quickly with better access to funding and resources. None of the safety steps in vaccine development were skipped: you can read about the approval of each of the vaccines by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mhra-guidance-on-coronavirus-covid-19#vaccines-and-vaccine-safety>.

### **Community testing**

Plymouth City Council is applying for asymptomatic community testing and if successful, we will focus on targeted workplace and setting testing. We recognise that a large part of our community is at higher risk, either because they cannot work from home or have to be out and about because they care for the vulnerable. There is already testing in place for some but we want to expand the scope of our testing programme to protect those who have no choice but to be out and about at work.

### **Help and support**

- The Plymouth City Council's dedicated COVID-19 webpages are updated frequently: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/coronaviruscovid19information>
- There is help with food, money and supplies for anyone needing to self-isolate: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/coronaviruscovid19information/ineedhelp>

### **How you can help us?**

- We need your help in encouraging your friends, family and wider community contacts to do simple and easy things that will help them feel better.
- We also need your help to keep Plymouth safe. The more people we can encourage to be COVID-safe, the more we can protect each other and slow the rise in cases across the city. We all want to avoid tighter restrictions – we want children to be able to learn, families to see their loved ones, restaurants to stay open. The best way to avoid further restrictions is if everyone works together. Follow us on social media @plymouthcc, retweet our public health messages and campaigns, refer people to our website [here](#) and follow the guidance!

### **How can we help you and the communities you are in touch with?**

We understand that everyone will have different needs or concerns and it is important for the Public Health Team to be able to address those, equipping everyone with the support they need in order to keep Plymouth safe. Part of our current insight work is looking how we can better help people across the city; if there is anything that we can provide which will benefit the communities you are in touch with, please share these with us: [COVID19@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:COVID19@plymouth.gov.uk). You can also contact us with any queries you have at the same time.



# TO THE SUPERMARKET BUT NOT BEYOND

Be an everyday hero in the fight against COVID-19

**Stay local**

**Wear a mask**

**Keep your distance**

Get the full facts at [plymouth.gov.uk/covid-19](https://plymouth.gov.uk/covid-19)