

Covid-19 update – 4 March 2021

Vaccine update

There's been [positive news this week](#) that both the Pfizer and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines are highly effective in reducing coronavirus infections among people aged 70 and over. In the over 80s, the data suggest that a single dose of either vaccine is more than 80% effective at preventing hospitalisation three to four weeks after the jab. There is also evidence which suggests the Pfizer vaccine leads to an 83% reduction in deaths.

In terms of the local vaccine programme rollout, people aged 60 or over are now invited to book a Covid-19 vaccination online via www.nhs.uk/coronavirus, or by calling 119. Similarly, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals, anyone in receipt of Carer's Allowance, or frontline Health or Social Care workers can book using the same link or number.

Self-isolation support scheme extended

[Financial help for people to self-isolate](#) has been extended until the end of June and expanded to include parents who need to have time off work to look after a child who is self-isolating. The scheme was due to expire at the end of February, but the Government has extended it to allow Councils to continue supporting everyone who needs assistance to self-isolate.

People who need to self-isolate can make a bid for funding from The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme which is administered by us. Those who don't meet the criteria are also able to apply for a discretionary payment of £500. Full details of the scheme – along with eligibility criteria – [can be found on our website](#). Again, our message is, if you are suffering hardship as result of needing to isolate, please get in touch. Support is available.

Testing update

Households with primary school, secondary school and college aged children, including childcare and support bubbles, will now be able to test themselves for coronavirus twice a week. The twice-weekly test kits can be accessed:

- via employers if they offer testing to employees
- at a local (asymptomatic) test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online.

The [guidance](#) provides information on who can be tested and how people can get a test.

Funding opportunities for your group

Foodbank grants

We have a small amount of funding left from the Winter Support Government Grant to help foodbanks in our area. We will be writing to all foodbank contacts to ask if they wish to receive a small grant to help provide food or fuel to families. If you know of any food bank which is struggling, or could benefit from additional financial resource, please [let Jay Clarke in the communities team know](#).

The Prince's Countryside Fund

[The Prince's Countryside Fund](#) was established by HRH The Prince of Wales in 2010 and exists to improve the prospects of family farm businesses and the quality of rural life. The Emergency Fund was set up so that it would be ready and available should the need arise. Currently grants of up to £10,000 are available to constituted, community-led organisations for projects that create resilient rural communities with populations of less than 3,000 residents. Some match funding is expected. [Applications](#) close on Friday 19 March.

Keep up to date with the latest funding

New and updated funds are announced on a daily basis in the [news section](#) of [Support Cambridgeshire](#) funding portal.

Action for Happiness: Mindful March

Staying mindful and practising positive approaches towards our new normal are vital for our mental wellbeing. [Action for Happiness](#) is focusing on staying mindful through the month of March with tips and resources, such as a downloadable calendar with prompts and webinars. The next webinar takes place on Thursday 11 March, from 7pm to 8pm, and has a focus on 'Practical hope', with [Oren Jay Sofer](#).

Mental health database by postcode

[The Hub of Hope](#) may be a useful tool for your work. It offers a database of mental health support which can be sorted by the postcode of the person in need, thanks to mental health charity Chasing the Stigma. Results include national, local, community, peer, private and NHS mental health support services in one place.

Best wishes

Bill Handley

Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health & Wellbeing
South Cambridgeshire District Council