

Covid-19 update – 4 February 2021

With the days getting that little bit longer and the birds starting to sing, I hope everyone is enjoying the lift that being outdoors can offer during the lockdown, whether on a daily walk or in the garden. There's also real progress being made towards reaching the Government's milestone of vaccinating the four priority groups by mid-February, so there is much to be hopeful about.

Eligible patients who have not yet had vaccination asked to call GPs

On the point of vaccine progress, there has been some confusion in the last couple of days around the messaging – whether people in the first four priority groups **should** or **shouldn't** call their GP if they haven't yet been invited for an appointment to have their first dose of the vaccine.

It is likely that there will be more from the Clinical Commissioning Group, which organises the vaccination programme locally, between now and the mid-February deadline, but for now they have asked us to remind people to check their local GP practice's websites for information and only to call if that GP practice has stated that they should do so.

Even when this is the case, this will only apply to any patients who are clinically extremely vulnerable and have been shielding, or who are aged 70 and over and live in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The message for everyone else who falls outside of the cohorts 1-4 priority groups remains the same – stay safe, sit tight and you will be contacted when it's your turn.

Further information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme can be found on [the CCG website](#).

As a reminder of the invitation process, please reassure anyone who is worried that they may be missing an invitation if they are not digitally-enabled – this is not the case. The Primary Care Networks will be using all of the following methods to invite people for vaccinations:

- Mobile – text message
- Phone call (landline or mobile)
- Letter in the post – if no response to calls/texts

National bookings are also by letter.

Vaccination sites in border areas

We know that some residents have had questions about where to get the latest information on the vaccine roll-out if they are registered at GP practices outside of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG area.

With that in mind, if local residents attend a GP surgery outside of South Cambridgeshire, please visit the relevant organisations as listed below for local updates on the vaccination programme.

- Please visit [Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group](#) if you receive primary care from Bedfordshire GPs.
- Please visit East and [North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group](#) if you receive primary care from Hertfordshire GPs.
- Note that GP practices in Royston are part of [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG](#).

Rapid testing for work-goers in Cambourne

A rapid testing centre opened yesterday at The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, CB23 6GW for key workers and people who are unable to work from home, and who are showing no symptoms. They will be able to book a free rapid test twice a week between 8am and 8pm, from Monday to Saturday.

The tests are strictly for people who have no symptoms of Covid-19 and are supplied by NHS Test and Trace for people aged 18 and over who are key workers or have to leave home to go to work. It enables those who test positive, and their contacts, to self-isolate, which can help drive down the transmission rate locally and save lives. To make the testing as worthwhile as possible, people need to take a test twice a week. Residents can book their rapid test [via the Cambridgeshire County Council website](#).

There are other sites across Cambridgeshire:

- The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire, CB23 6GW
- Queen Mary Centre, Queen's Road, Wisbech, Fenland, PE13 2PE
- Soham Town Rangers Football Club, Julius Martin Lane, Soham, Ely, CB7 5EQ – opening Friday 5 February
- The Coneygear Centre, Butts Grove Way, Huntingdon, PE29 1PE – opening Thursday 11 February
- The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catherine's Road, Arbury, Cambridge, CB4 3XJ – opening Friday 12 February.

Self-isolation support: Direct mail to residents

People are still catching Covid-19 and will still need to self-isolate. To help make sure that residents know about the support that is available to help them with this, we are going to post a Coronavirus-related direct mail to all households in South Cambridgeshire from next week. This will contain an A4 flyer, produced by the Council, that details the financial and practical support available to people who need to self-isolate. Please [visit our website](#) for more information.

The envelope will also include a flyer produced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), providing information about the vaccine roll-out locally. These will be sent to all residents during the weeks commencing 8 and 15 February. The documents that will be sent are attached for your reference.

Dog walking

Advice has been updated for [people in England with animals](#) which highlights that although the Government generally advises that people should exercise once a day, they can go out more often to walk a dog. This should, however, be limited where possible. This is covered by the exemptions for animal welfare and exercise.

Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms

On 27 January, MHCLG updated the [guidance for owners and operators of playgrounds and outdoor gyms](#) to enable their use during the national lockdown. During the lockdown, playgrounds are primarily open for use by children who do not have access to private outdoor space, like their own garden. Although parents, guardians or carers can take children to a playground for exercise, they must not socialise with other people while there.

90-minute online sessions to help people find work

C3 Church is running three [90-minute sessions](#) covering: what are my skills and where are the jobs?; application forms and CVs; and preparing for interviews. Session dates are: 11, 18 and 25 March.

Please feel free to recommend these to any residents who are hoping to find work and may appreciate some guidance and support. A limited number of personalised online support sessions are also available to help people focus on their specific circumstances and needs to help them find work.

Financial support for residents

C3 Churches are also offering some [online finance courses](#) covering help with bills, debts, loans and budgeting (session one) and money saving strategies, universal credit and grants (session two). If you would like to recommend these free courses, please feel free to do so. Session dates: 7.30pm to 8.45pm on [Thursday 25 February](#) and [Thursday 4 March](#).

Funding opportunities

Anglian Water Positive Difference Fund

Anglian Water's [Positive Difference Fund](#) – to which Cambridgeshire-based non-profit groups can apply for £5,000-£10,000 to support vulnerable people during the pandemic – closes for applications tomorrow, 5 February 2021.

Good Life Fund

Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind (CPSL Mind) is offering £500 grants to help set up groups that connect people and promote wellbeing. Suggestions include book clubs, craft classes and activities that encourage people to learn new skills. [The simple application process asks for at least four people who are willing to volunteer their time but does not require groups to be constituted.](#)

Support Cambridgeshire

The Support Cambridgeshire website contains a repository of Funding Alerts, organised by theme, which you can view including an entire segment on COVID support funding for organisations. [It's a great place to start if you want a quick overview of the funds that are relevant to your organisation.](#)

Best wishes

Bill Handley

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