

Special Edition Keeping in Touch with our Members

Good Morning/Afternoon /Evening and Welcome to a Special Edition of "Keeping In Touch With Members".

Included in this issue are the regulations related to the National Lockdown but also you can view the very latest edition of your very own Newsletter produced by Chris Henderson our Newsletter Editor by clicking here [January 2021 NEWSLETTER](#).

All of the following information is provided from Thurrock Council apart from the very last letter from our NHS CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups)

New guidance – National lockdown: stay at home

The new strain of coronavirus is spreading fast and we all need to play our part to stop the spread. Under new government guidance announced yesterday (Monday 4 January) some of the key rules that you should now follow include:

Stay at home

Only leave your home or be outside your home when absolutely necessary such as:

- when shopping for essentials
- work if you cannot work from home
- exercising (limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area)
- meeting your [support bubble](#) or [childcare bubble](#) where necessary (if you are legally allowed to form one)

Meeting others

- please do not leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a [support bubble](#) with
- you may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble

It's vital to [stay 2 metres apart](#) from anyone not in your household.

Education

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of [critical workers](#). All other children will learn remotely until February half term. Early Years settings remain open.

[More government guidance for the national lockdown is available online.](#)

If you are [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable](#) or you know or live with someone who is, the latest government advice is that you should begin shielding again.

Following Message Provided by Cllr Rob Gledhill Leader of Thurrock Council

The national lockdown announced on Tuesday 5th January 2021 means that we must all stay at home, only leaving for house for a limited number of reasons such as to buy food. I know this will be a difficult time for people, but it's important to remember the action we take now will help to ensure that the lockdown does not have to be in place longer than the Government have currently outlined. The NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme is being rolled out rapidly across Essex by the [NHS Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust \(EPUT\)](#) in the priority order as set by the NHS, but in support of this we must continue to do all we can to lower the spread of the virus and protect those in our society who are most vulnerable to complications or death from COVID-19.

We are a strong community here in Thurrock, and every day I hear of acts of kindness – from a neighbour dropping off shopping to a Clinically Extremely Vulnerable person who can no longer go out to get groceries, to a young person walking a dog for a family who are self-isolating as they are contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

It's by continuing with these small but important acts to support one another that we can come together and make our way out of this lockdown.

Likewise, small steps that we take to change our behaviour can have a big impact on the spread of the virus. Please take that extra further step back from people to ensure you have a full 2 metres between you, don't just go ahead into the shop if you've left your face covering in the car, and always remember to wash your hands the moment you get home.

As always, if you have any of the symptoms of coronavirus – new continuous cough, a loss or change to your sense of taste or smell, or a high temperature – you must immediately self-isolate and book a test, which can be done quickly and easily at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test You must not go to buy essential items or even for a walk, the only reason you should leave your house is to go to the testing site and you should stay indoors while you await the results.

As you can see below, numbers of positive tests are still rising across all age brackets so please do not put your loved ones at risk – play your part by remembering to follow hands, face, space at all times.

Keep your distance to reduce the spread

To reduce the risk of catching or spreading coronavirus you should ensure that you stay two metres apart from anyone not in your household or [support bubble](#) at all times.

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, clouds of tiny airborne particles known as aerosols and through direct contact. An infected person can pass on the virus through talking, breathing, coughing or sneezing even if they do not have any symptoms. One in three people with COVID-19 do not display any symptoms, and so can be spreading the virus without even realising.

Social distancing is essential to stop the spread of the virus. The risk of contracting the new variant of the virus rises dramatically – up to as much as 10 times more likely – as distance reduces below 1 metre compared to keeping a full 2 metres apart.

Given how infectious this new variant of COVID-19 is, it is incredibly important that we all diligently follow these rules to reduce our risk of catching and spreading the virus:

- keep the number of other people that you come into contact with to an absolute minimum
- minimise the time spent with each other person in any situation
- disinfect surfaces regularly – surfaces that are used regularly such as door handles can collect a significant amount of COVID-19 droplets
- on public transport and in many indoor spaces you must [wear a face covering](#) by law unless you are exempt
- if indoors, make sure rooms have a flow of fresh air including keeping doors and windows open

You should try to maintain social distancing if providing informal childcare within a [childcare bubble](#). It's crucial that you do not meet socially with your childcare bubble, and avoid seeing members of your childcare and support bubbles at the same time.

Vaccinations

The NHS are continuing to vaccinate people aged 80 and over, care home residents and staff, as well as widening out the offer to frontline health and social care staff in both [hospital hubs and GP led local vaccination centres](#). This vaccination programme is being administered locally by the [NHS Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust \(EPUT\)](#).

The announcement that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has now also been authorised for use in the UK will see an increase in supplies and means that people can be vaccinated more quickly. These supplies of the vaccine and their distribution are coordinated by EPUT.

Thurrock Council does not administer the vaccination programme, or have any influence over the order in which people are vaccinated. [The priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccination](#) have been set by the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI).

Please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, for example by calling your GP. The NHS will contact you directly via text message or phone call. A genuine text message from the NHS will NEVER ask you to provide bank account or financial details so please be alert for any scam messages offering you the option to pay for a vaccination. If you do receive a scam message, please report it to Crimestoppers on 0800 287 5030.

It is important that anyone who has had the vaccine continues to follow government guidance on social distancing and wearing a face covering.

You can read more about the NHS vaccination programme on the [EPUT website](#).

Garden waste. Brown bin collections are suspended

Garden waste collections in Thurrock are temporarily suspended from Thursday 7 January.

We understand that this suspension of the brown bin collection may be inconvenient, but the decision had to be made in order to ensure weekly recycling and waste collections can continue as scheduled.

The latest government guidance for the national lockdown, including the new requirement for those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable to once more shield, as well as the continued need for contacts of positive cases to self-isolate, is having an impact on the waste service. We are doing everything we can to support our staff and residents to stay safe and ensure they are adhering to government guidance.

Given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pressures the waste service are facing are constantly changing which is why more notice could unfortunately not be given for this change. This is a temporary change and will be kept under review.

We ask residents either compost their food waste or place it into their normal waste bin. Home composting will be the best option for garden waste, and please can you store your brown bins away from the street until notice is given about collections resuming

Thank you for your support for our waste crews.

Keep up-to-date with local news

Thurrock's residents can keep up-to-date with what is going on in the borough by signing up to receive regular email newsletters from Thurrock Council.

Newsletters cover a wide variety of subjects including weather and traffic alerts to help keep you safely on the move, news on specific projects and subjects and newsletters with help and advice for anyone looking to start a new career.

To find out more and subscribe today visit [Thurrock News](#).

Sent on behalf of NHS Basildon and Brentwood, NHS Castle Point and Rochford, NHS Mid Essex, NHS Southend and NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

While we continue to respond to extreme pressures across health and social care created by a second surge in COVID-19 cases locally, I am delighted to bring news of our progress in local COVID-19 vaccination programme. This will be key in our fight against the virus, as vaccines will help curb infections and then allow restrictions to be lifted.

Last week's announcement that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has been authorised by the MHRA for use in the UK is very welcome and we are seeing more

COVID-19 vaccine supplies arriving across mid and south Essex. Increased supply also means that vaccination can now be expanded to frontline health and social care workers.

The NHS has made an excellent start to rolling out [Covid-19 vaccines](#), with new vaccination sites going live on a weekly basis through a number of GP-led primary care networks. Every single patient that we have vaccinated over the last couple of weeks have got their own personal stories to the difference it's going to make. Subject to the supplies coming through, we are expecting full coverage across the whole of mid and south Essex by the end of next week. Details of all vaccination sites are available [on this webpage.](#)

In line with the JCVI's prioritisation, for now this means continuing to vaccinate people aged 80 and over, care home residents and staff, as well as widening out the offer to frontline health and social care staff in both our hospital hubs and local vaccination centres.

The Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) has said that both the Pfizer/BioNTech and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine 'give very high protection against severe disease' and both have good safety records.

Updated [guidance](#) from MHRA, JCVI and the UK Chief Medical Officers has also been published to advise increasing the spacing of second vaccine doses for both the new Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine and the current Pfizer BioNTech vaccine.

[The four UK CMOs](#) have said that, 'Prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list will protect the greatest number of at risk people overall in the shortest possible time'.

This means that:

- For those who have received their first vaccination and are due to receive their second dose w/c Monday 4 January, no further action is required, and these appointments should continue as planned.
- For those that have had, or are scheduled to receive their first vaccination after 31 December, an appointment to receive the second dose should be scheduled by 12 weeks.
- If existing second dose appointment needs to be rescheduled, patients will be contacted. No further action is required.

Patients still need to receive their second vaccine, and it is important that they attend their second appointment once scheduled.

It is also important that anyone who has had the vaccine continues to follow government guidance on social distancing and wearing a mask as well as the additional measures in place where they live.

The wider public also have an important part to play to help them do this, please help us to get these messages out:

- Please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you;
- When we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments on time – please avoid arriving early as we want to avoid queues;

- Please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.

I would like to end this note by acknowledging the astonishing efforts of our hardworking staff who are working around the clock to fight the battle against the virus.

Best wishes,

Anthony 'Mac' McKeever

**Executive Lead Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership
and Joint Accountable Officer for its five CCGs**

This is similar to the previous Tier 4 measures that Thurrock was following as people in this category are at greater risk of suffering a more serious illness as a result of contracting COVID-19. Please [take extra care](#) to stay safe:

- stay home as much as you can
- can someone help with shopping? Find out more on the [Stronger Together website](#)
- follow [social distancing](#) and all [other guidance](#) at all times