

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin's

Care Cascade

Welcome to your care provider update

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Shropshire,
Telford and
Wrekin
Integrated Care
System



Welcome back

Welcome to your latest care sector newsletter.

These editions centre around giving you and your team the information and resources you need relating to winter planning, with a particular focus on Covid-19 - including vaccinations, as well as flu vaccinations.

If you would like to include anything in the next edition, please email naomi.penrose@nhs.net

NHS to offer booster booking to all 18+ by end of year

NHS to offer booster booking to every adult by end of December

The NHS vaccination programme will offer every adult the chance to book a Covid-19 booster vaccine by the end of the year in a race to protect the nation against the Omicron variant.

As part of the biggest and fastest vaccine programme in health service history, online bookings are available for everyone aged 18 and over.

The NHS is prioritising bookings for boosters and is urging people to book a slot to guarantee their vital job. A number of vaccination sites are also offering a walk-in service for 18s and over.

As the most challenging phase of the rollout expands even further and faster, the NHS has asked every local area to dramatically increase the number of appointments they have in place for vaccinations.

As of this week, opening hours for vaccine centres will be extended and every area of the country should have centres available that are open seven days a week.

More pop-up sites will be coming online with local areas looking at the most convenient sites for their communities - from trucks and buses in parks and shopping centres to sports stadiums and leisure centres.



HM Government

The NHS logo, consisting of the letters 'NHS' in white on a blue rectangular background.

A portrait of a smiling woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a black top. The background behind her is a stylized geometric pattern of yellow and red triangles.

COVID-19 OMICRON EMERGENCY

GET BOOSTED NOW

Every adult in the country now needs to get a Covid-19 booster vaccine, because two doses does not give you enough protection against catching Omicron.

GET YOUR BOOSTER NOW
NHS.UK/COVIDVACCINATION

There are already almost 3,000 sites across the country - more than at any point of the NHS Covid-19 vaccination rollout—and even more new sites will go live in the coming days.

GP teams will be asked to clinically prioritise their services to free up maximum capacity to support the Covid-19 vaccination programme, alongside delivering critical appointments such as cancer, urgent and emergency care. This might mean that for some people, routine appointments are postponed as part of the national mission to roll out boosters.

Amanda Pritchard, NHS Chief Executive said: “NHS staff were already working incredibly hard to deliver Covid vaccines as swiftly as possible but the threat posed by Omicron is grave.

“Scientists are very concerned about the spread of Omicron due to the speed with which it spreads and because two doses do not appear to provide much protection but thankfully, a booster dramatically improves this.

“That is why the Government have asked us to prioritise boosters over other routine care.

“I know NHS staff will again, do everything in our power to rise to this extraordinary challenge and ensure the Covid-19 vaccination programme provides as much protection as possible as we prepare for a new wave of infections that could be even greater than those that have gone before.

“The online booking system is now open to all adults - please don't hesitate with your booking and get boosted now.”

In Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW), health and care leaders have set a goal of jabbing up to 160,000 people by New Year's Eve - including offering a booster to the 137,000 people aged 18 and over who will be eligible before the year-end.

STW has been vaccinating in excess of 3,000 people a day in recent weeks, but that number is rising fast as a result of increasing capacity in community pharmacies, a scaled-up programme in the GP-led Primary Care Networks and extended opening hours in the region's hospital hubs and vaccination centres. Capacity is anticipated to hit 10,500 a day by Saturday (18 December).

NHS chiefs are urging people to not delay their booster and book their jab in the run up to the Christmas break.

The NHS has advised that the best way to get your booster quickly is by booking online or by calling 119 but if walk in centres have capacity to do so, they can vaccinate adults aged 18 and over immediately.

How do I get my Covid-19 booster or 1st, 2nd or 3rd dose in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin?

Details of the walk-in clinics available in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin can be found by double-clicking here: [COVID-19 vaccination walk-in clinic times \(stwics.org.uk\)](https://www.stwics.org.uk/covid-19-vaccination-walk-in-clinic-times)

Please keep checking back as new sites, dates and times are being added all the time.

Please note: If you had your 2nd dose at least 3 months (or a minimum of 91 days) ago you are now eligible for a Covid-19 booster. You don't need to have been notified by the NHS to walk-in or book an appointment via the National Booking Service for your Covid-19 booster if you are 30 or over, aged 16 or over with a health condition that puts you at high risk from Covid-19 or a frontline health and social care worker.

Omicron guidance for Care Homes

Following on from the Government's announcement relating to the Omicron variant, it is important that we share with you the information coming from central Government regarding the enhanced measures that it is really important you follow.

Despite the challenge of Omicron, we are keen to ensure that visiting is still able to take place in order to enable residents to continue to see their families and friends. To ensure these visits can take place as safely as possible, along with current infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, regular testing, and PPE, DHoSC are introducing the following measures:

- In order to boost individual protection via the Covid-19 boosters vaccination rollout, the NHS will guarantee that any homes that have not yet received a visit are offered one s a matter of priority (care homes can contact their Primary Care Network Clinical Care Home Lead if they haven't had their first visit). NHS colleagues will ensure all homes get the visits they need to ensure everyone has a chance to access the vaccine.
- Social care workers can continue to book a vaccination slot via the National Booking Service, and frontline care workers have priority status within the booking system. **Care workers should book now if it is two months since their second dose, so that they can receive their vaccination once three months has passed.** Care workers who are due their booster can also use the walk in clinics. Proof of employment is required. All walk-in clinics can be found here: <https://www.stwics.org.uk/our-priorities/covid-19-vaccination-programme/walk-in-clinic-times>
- Increasing the number of LFD tests that each staff member should take each week from two to three, which is on top of their weekly PCR test.
- Each care home resident should be limited to three nominated visitors who can visit regularly. This will be in addition to all residents being able to nominate an essential care giver who can visit for companionship or for care needs. In line with the system that was in place earlier in the pandemic, the nominated visitors should remain the same, barring an exceptional change in circumstances. Visits at the end of life should always be supported.
- When going out of the care home residents should:
 - ◇ Avoid visiting people they do not usually spend time with regularly
 - ◇ Avoid visits out that involve mixing with a large number of people indoors
 - ◇ Have had a COVID-19 booster before taking part in a visit out of the care home if eligible, unless exempt
 - ◇ Ask those they are visiting to undertake regular LFD testing, and receive a negative LFD on the day of the visit
 - ◇ Ask those they are visiting to have had their COVID-19 vaccinations including booster if eligible

Omicron guidance for Care Homes (cont'd)

- Residents will still be asked to self-isolate following an emergency stay in hospital or following a visit out of the care home that is determined to be high-risk following an individual risk assessment.
- For other visits out of the care home, to ensure that care home residents can continue to go out of the care home to visit loved ones or spend time in the local community, there is a requirement for residents who have had two doses of the vaccine, or who are exempt, to take LFD tests every other day for 14 days when they return from spending time out of the care home.
- **For those residents who have not had two doses of the vaccine and who are not exempt, there is a requirement them to isolate for 14 days following a visit out in order to mitigate the risk that they endanger their fellow residents by bringing the new variant into the care home.**

We cannot stress enough the importance of updating the tracker - this is now being scrutinised by government officers daily and feeds into the national records of care home booster vaccination uptake. Your time is precious - Regular completion of the tracker will avoid unnecessary contact from us and DoHSC!

Local visitors' guidance is being revised and will be published shortly.

Additionally we would to remind you if you have any shortages of PPE you can contact: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-social-care-services/ppe-request-form>.

If you have any issues with the availability of testing kits, please let



Omicron guidance for Domiciliary Care Providers

Following on from the Government's announcement relating to the Omicron variant, it is important that we share the information regarding the enhanced measures that it is really important you are aware of:

- **Social care workers can continue to book a vaccination or booster slot via the National Booking Service, and frontline care workers have priority status within the booking system. Care workers should book now for a booster if it is two months since their second dose so that they can receive their vaccination once three months has passed. Care workers who are due their booster can also use our local walk in clinics. Proof of employment is required. All walk-in clinics can be found here: <https://www.stwics.org.uk/our-priorities/covid-19-vaccination-programme/walk-in-clinic-times>**
- Providers are to increase the number of LFD tests that each staff member should take each week from two to three, this is on top of their weekly PCR test.

We cannot stress enough the importance of updating the tracker - this is now being scrutinised by government officers daily and feeds into the national records of care home booster vaccination uptake. Your time is precious - Regular completion of the tracker will avoid unnecessary contact from us and DoHSC!

Local visitors' guidance is being revised and will be published shortly.

Additionally we would to remind you if you have any shortages of PPE you can contact: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-social-care-services/ppe-request-form> to order a supply to tide you over whilst central deliveries catch up.



Updated guidance for Nursing and Residential registered care home visits



The DPHs recognise that home managers and owners best understand the risks in their homes and individuals that they care for and that they must try to balance the benefits that visiting provides to the wellbeing of residents and their families, against the potential risk of visitors introducing infection into the care home or of spreading infection from the care home to the community to mitigate the spread of Covid 19. Where visits are deemed not advisable or not Covid 19 safe, it is the responsibility of care homes to ensure there is alternative ways to enable safe and regular meaningful contact with family.

Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils understand the importance of family contact and recognise the need to have a sensible and measured approach on the advice for care home visits. This guidance is intended to clarify the position and responsibilities for care homes and to set out the general risks to people in care homes presented by having face to face visitors.

The current community position is rapidly changing. Regular updates will be made available on both Councils webpages:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/number-of-coronavirus-cases-in-shropshire/>

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20692/coronavirus_covid-19

- [The Government guidance on visiting care homes, which was updated on 15 December can be found by double-clicking here.](#)
- [Updated guidance for Registered Care Home visits - Shropshire Telford and Wrekin - December 2021](#)

Stop Covid-19 hanging around



Care staff are being reminded of the importance of simple ventilation techniques to reduce the risks of catching Covid-19 this winter.

An explainer film has been released by scientists from the universities of Cambridge and Leeds, in collaboration with the Government, demonstrating the positive impact of reducing Covid-19 levels indoors by opening a window for just 10 minutes every hour when socialising with others.

The film demonstrates how, in a home setting, someone infected with the virus talking and interacting with another person produces a build-up of Covid-19 particles in the air. These particles then linger in an unventilated room, like smoke, meaning the risk of catching Covid-19 is significantly increased. However, Covid-19 particles disperse quickly when good ventilation is introduced, even for a short period.



[The video can be viewed by double-clicking this link.](#)

While life-saving vaccines remain the best defence against Covid-19 - giving over 90% protection against hospitalisation from the virus - people can still catch Covid-19 even if they have been double vaccinated. With around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 showing no symptoms, it could be passed onto others without knowing.

With fewer restrictions in place this winter, following the success of the vaccination programme, the act of refreshing air in the home when people have visitors is even more important for everyone to keep infections down.

Dr Thomas Waite, Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, said: “Small but important actions can help protect us against Covid-19. Getting vaccinations, wearing a face covering in enclosed spaces and taking regular Covid-19 tests all make an important difference but it is also crucial that we don’t overlook the value of ventilation.”

Notice about management of outbreaks

- ⇒ We are currently awaiting updated guidance on the management of outbreaks in care homes and will advise you of this when it is available. If the Omicron variant is detected within a care home setting then you will be contacted by either UKSA or your local authority health protection team to advise you of the actions that are required.

Vaccination as a condition of deployment: extension to self-certification cut-off

A letter from Claire Armstrong, Director of Adult Social Care Delivery - dated 8 December

Dear colleagues,

Vaccination as a condition of deployment (VCOD) - extension to self-certification cut-off.

While the vast majority of care home workers are now fully vaccinated against Covid-19, we understand that there are a small number of people working in care homes who cannot have the vaccination for medical reasons.

For this reason, we introduced a formal process to enable people to apply for proof of their medical exemption status to ensure they can comply with the regulations. Before that formal process launched staff were able to self-certify that they meet the medical exemption criteria.

We are writing to you to inform you that we will now be **extending the cut-off date for self-certification for everyone who has registered a self-certification before 24 December 2021.**

This means that **self-certification forms will continue to be valid until 31 March 2022, so long as they have been received before 24 December 2021.**

The reason for this extension is because we are aware that some people who have applied for a formal exemption have experienced a delay in the outcome of their application being notified. **Extending the cut-off for self-certification will allow sufficient time for individuals whose formal medical exemption is unsuccessful to be fully vaccinated before 31 March 2022.**

Individuals whose formal medical exemption application has been reviewed will now be sent their notification letters in the post on 7 December 2021. If notification letters are not received within 2 to 3 weeks for these individuals, they are encouraged to call 119.

Everyone who self-certifies as exempt from Covid-19 vaccination before 24 December 2021 will have until 31 March 2022 to secure formal proof of their medical exemption status. **From 1 April 2022, they will either need to show proof of a formal medical exemption or be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 in order to comply with the regulation and continue working in a CQC-regulated care home.**

Care home workers who wish to apply for a formal medical exemption should do so as soon as possible and inform their employer of the outcome of their application once they receive it.

We would be grateful if you could share this information with your staff and professional networks so that the people who are affected are updated.

Thank you once again for your continued support for the implementation of vaccines as a condition of deployment regulations. Your efforts play a crucial role in protecting those most vulnerable to Covid-19.

⇒ **[More information can be found by double-clicking this link.](#)**

Support package to protect care sector this winter

Additional support is being offered to the social care sector as part of a package of new measures to protect people from the spread of the Omicron variant.

Vaccines remain our best line of defence and the NHS will redouble efforts to reach those care home residents who haven't yet had their boosters.

Specialist vaccination teams are being expanded and deployed to guarantee all care home residents and staff, as well as people who are housebound and their caregivers, are offered the booster - with those most at risk prioritised for the job.

Care homes will be able to request follow up booster visits from vaccination teams for staff and residents and home visit payments for GPs will be increased to further ramp up the home care programme.

More than 70% of older adult care home residents have already received a booster jab and 97% of older adult care homes have been visited by vaccination teams. Those who haven't been visited, normally due to an outbreak, will receive visits shortly.

Care workers will benefit from a £300 million extension, in addition to the £162.5 million announced in October, to support recruitment and retention. It can be used to pay for bonuses and bring forward planned pay rises for care staff, fund overtime and staff banks increasing workforce numbers up until the end of March.

This will in turn help reduce pressure on the NHS this winter by alleviating delays to discharge - freeing up beds and ensuring people are being cared for in the right place.

Recognising the importance of companionship for the health and wellbeing of residents, visits to care homes will continue under updated guidance that permits 3 visitors and an essential care giver per resident, in order to balance the current Covid-19 risk and the need to keep people safe in line with clinical advice.

Staff testing will be increased from 2 lateral flow tests per week to 3 as well as a weekly PCR test. Fully vaccinated residents visiting out will be asked to take a lateral flow test on alternate days for 2 weeks after a visit. Those not fully vaccinated will be expected to isolate following a visit out.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said: "Throughout the pandemic we have done everything we can to protect the adult social care sector, and the emergence of the Omicron variant means this is more important than ever.

"This new funding will support our incredible workforce by recruiting new staff and rewarding those who have done so much during this pandemic.

"Boosting the booster rollout in social care and updating the visiting guidance will help keep the most vulnerable people in our society safe from the virus this winter."

The Omicron variant has led to infections doubling every 2 to 3 days and estimates by UKHSA of 10,000 cases with increased transmissibility.

Care settings will be given extra guidance for infection prevention and control measures and PPE. The government has already committed to providing free PPE in care and announced an additional £388 million to support testing and infection control in September.

⇒ [The full press release can be read in full by double-clicking this link.](#)

Christmas cheer from the Shropshire Music Service



A FREE concert made specially for Shropshire care establishments - residents and staff.

Featuring primary schools from all around Shropshire to bring Christmas Cheer during the festive season.

Shropshire Music Service, have been busy creating a special Christmas Concert for you to watch as many times as you wish over the festive season. We hope it brings you “Christmas Cheer” as we know you would usually have visits from local schools during December.

Please email if you would like us to send you the link: ad-



And finally... a very Merry Christmas!



We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you once again for your hard work and commitment supporting and caring for the most vulnerable people in what has been another challenging and difficult year.

We wish you, your families, residents and staff a Merry Christmas.