

Update on what the NHS in Norfolk and Waveney is doing to respond to coronavirus (28 October 2020)

Cases rising in Norfolk and Waveney

The number of people with COVID-19 is continuing to rise in Norfolk and Waveney. While the rates are still lower than in other parts of country, local NHS services are now starting to feel the impact of the rise in cases.

Our hospitals are treating more people with COVID-19. On 12 October there were 22 people with COVID-19 in our hospitals – two weeks later this had risen to 76 people. This is still far lower than the previous peak, when we had over 260 patients with COVID-19 in our hospitals. But if the number of people in the community with the virus continues to increase, so will the number of people in our hospitals. And the more people in our hospitals with COVID-19, the less time our staff will have for treating those waiting for non-urgent surgery and procedures.

We are better prepared and know more about the virus than we did in the spring. So while our hospitals are now treating more people with the virus, there are fortunately fewer people needing to go to intensive care as a result of the different treatments available.

However, this is a nasty disease and although most people recover without treatment, some people can experience Long Covid for weeks or even months. And if we stop taking preventative action, the virus will continue to spread.

As individuals and collectively, we must do all that we can to follow the rules in order to keep people safe and well, and to minimise the disruption to NHS services. We know from the first wave of the pandemic that if we all act together that we can prevent the spread of the virus.

So please, take a minute to talk with your family and friends, the community groups you belong to and your colleagues, about how we can keep people safe by following the rule of six, washing our hands regularly, using a face covering and keeping our distance.

By acting together, we will save lives and protect the NHS.

The poster features the NHS logo in the top right corner and the HM Government logo in the top left. The main text reads: "Got any coronavirus symptoms? Book a test now, even if you don't feel too bad." To the right, it says "Use the NHS COVID-19 app or go to gov.uk/coronavirus". At the bottom, there are three icons: a thermometer for "High temperature", a person coughing for "New continuous cough", and a nose with a slash for "Change/loss of smell/taste". In the bottom right corner, there is a box with the text "STAY ALERT CONTROL THE VIRUS SAVE LIVES". The background is yellow with red and white diagonal stripes on the right side.

More people than ever vaccinated against flu in Norfolk and Waveney

GP practices and community pharmacies have vaccinated tens of thousands more people who are at greater risk from flu than the same time last year.

By 16 October, 168,000 people eligible for a free NHS vaccine had received theirs, compared to 122,000 last year.

Amongst the over 65s – the age group most vulnerable to flu – 126,500 people, or just short of 50% of those living in Norfolk and Waveney, had been vaccinated. Locally the NHS is on track to hit and should exceed the 75% target for vaccinations in the over 65s.

Dr Anoop Dhesi, local GP and Chair of NHS Norfolk and Waveney CCG, said:

“Influenza is a nasty respiratory illness which kills around 15,000 people across the country each year. It leaves many other people, particularly those with long term conditions and the frail elderly, so poorly that they have to be admitted to hospital.

“Getting the flu vaccine is more important than ever this year, as people at high risk from COVID-19 are also those most at risk from flu. As well as helping to protect you and your family from a serious virus, getting vaccinated is also one way that you can help to ease pressure on the NHS and social care as they continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic this winter.”

GP practices have been working hard to administer the vaccine at their surgeries and at mass clinics whilst maintaining Covid-safe practices for patients and staff. Heathgate Medical Practice used Poringland Community Centre to vaccinate 1,000 people and the Coastal Partnership practices have created their own drive-throughs.

Dr Anoop Dhesi, added: “This is a real testament to our local GP practices and community pharmacies, who have risen to the additional challenges they are faced with this year, such as delivering the vaccination programme with increased infection prevention and control measures in place.”

The flu vaccine is always delivered and administered in a phased approach, with vaccine supplies being released gradually so that those most at risk across the country receive it first.

Early demand for the flu vaccine has been higher than usual. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has recently announced how all GP surgeries can access additional national supplies of influenza vaccine.

As flu levels generally do not begin to rise until December, people do not need to get vaccinated in September or October, as the vaccination programme continues right up until and into the flu season.

This year will be the most comprehensive flu programme ever, with more people eligible for a free vaccination. As well as offering the free flu vaccine to people who are at greatest risk, there is a national ambition to offer the vaccination to all people aged 50 to 64 years old, who aren't already in an at-risk group, later in the year. People in this age group should wait until they are invited by their GP practice to receive their vaccination.

More information on who is eligible for the free flu vaccine is available here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/who-should-have-flu-vaccine/>

Ensuring our workforce is healthy, well and able to work will be really important this winter. Nationally, there's an aspiration that all NHS trusts will vaccinate 100% of their frontline staff against flu this year. Our NHS trusts are doing well and have similarly vaccinated more frontline staff this year than they had at the same point last year.

Self-isolate to save lives

Self-isolating means staying at home. You need to self-isolate if:

- you have any COVID-19 symptoms
- you or someone in your household are waiting for a test result
- you or someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19
- you're notified by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app

How to self-isolate:

- ✓ Work from home if you can
- ✓ Get essentials delivered to your door
- ✓ Exercise in your home or garden
- ✗ Do not leave your home
- ✗ Do not have visitors



New local testing site for Great Yarmouth

A new local testing site has been opened in Great Yarmouth to help create more testing capacity in the borough. The site at Nelson Road car park has been operational since 23 October.

Norfolk's Health Protection Board applied to the Department for Health and Social Care to create the additional capacity in the county.

People are encouraged to book a test for the new centre online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119. The tests are a walk-through service only and are in addition to permanent and mobile testing sites that are already in operation.

Those working at sites are provided with personal protective equipment to protect themselves from the virus and to ensure the safety of the wider community. Those attending the site must wear a face covering with the exception of those under three. Everyone must maintain social distancing.

Long Covid

COVID-19 affects us all. No one is free from risk. Although most people recover without treatment, some people can experience Long Covid for weeks or even months.

If you are suffering from long-term symptoms, speak to your GP or visit: <https://yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk>

Protect yourself and others:

- ✓ Wash your hands
- ✓ Wear a mask
- ✓ Keep your distance

Mental health support available for the public

- It's important that we look after our mental wellbeing during this time – for tips and advice visit www.everymindmatters.co.uk.
- If you are worried about your own mental health and wellbeing call First Response, a free 24/7 helpline offering immediate support, on 0808 196 3494.
- 11 to 25 year olds in Norfolk and Waveney can get support and online counselling via www.Kooth.com. The service provides support or advice on any topic, including managing your feelings during the pandemic.
- JustOneNorfolk has a wealth of information and links to support the health and wellbeing of your family: www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk.

NHS
Norfolk and Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust



First Response

Call: 0808 196 3494
(Freephone)

A 24/7 service for people of all ages in Norfolk and Suffolk requiring mental health care, advice and support.

A colorful graphic for Kooth. It features a yellow background with a blue border. On the left, the Kooth logo is displayed above the text 'Lost your routine? We'll be here when you need us'. Below this, a list of services is shown with icons: Discussion Boards, Kooth Magazine & Help Articles, Free Counselling, and Journal & Self-Help Tools. On the right, there is an illustration of a person's silhouette looking at a calendar and a clock. At the bottom right, it says 'Sign up for free at Kooth.com'.