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Dear Care and Community Support Provider,

Once again thank you to you and your staff for helping to keep our residents safe and well during this time.

After the announcement on Saturday (27th November) by the Prime Minister that cases of the new Omicron COVID-19 variant had been found in the UK, new measure have been put in place which came into effect on Tuesday.

Whilst we are understanding the consequences, in terms of transmissibility and severity of disease caused, it is important to continue with our current COVID measures.

**Face coverings**

Public and staff are now required to wear face coverings in a range of public areas including:

* shops, supermarkets & pharmacies.
* shopping centres
* post offices, banks & building societies
* premises providing personal care and beauty treatments such as barbers, hair salons, tattoo and piercing studios, nail salons, massage centres
* takeaways without space for consumption of food or drink on premises
* public transport
* any car, van, or HGV, during a professional driving lesson, a formal driving test, or during one of the practical tests for giving driving instruction.

This does not apply to people who are unable to wear a face covering, which includes children under the age of 11 and people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability.

[You can find out more on Face coverings, when to wear one and exemptions on the Government website.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own)

**Vaccinations**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has announced it will be rolling out the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme to all adults over the age of 18, as well as reducing the gap between the second dose and a booster. Boosters for under 40s has not started yet, we are waiting for the go live date from the national team.

The Committee has also recommended children aged 12 to 15 should be invited for a second dose three months after their first. [Use this link to book you vaccinations.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/)

**How to get you vaccination**

**Walk-in** - You can search for local walk in vaccination centres [here](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site)

**Book** - You can book your jab by calling the National Booking Service on 119 or by visiting the [website](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) You will be offered a list of slots at vaccination centres including any available at pharmacy run sites in Sefton.

Or

If you are a ***Southport and Formby*** patient aged over 16 you can also book an appointment at Southport Centre for Health and Wellbeing Centre by calling 01704 395830.

Or

If you are a ***South Sefton*** resident aged over 16 you can book at Seaforth Village Surgery by calling 07979938229 or at Netherton Health Centre on 0151 247 6413.

Any carers under the age of 40 years, will need to show evidence of their employment/ caring role when they attend for vaccine booster.

**Tests**

The Council is still reminding anyone who starts to show COVID symptoms of a high temperature, a new persistent cough or a loss of taste or smell, should book a PCR test by calling 119 or visiting [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus).

It is recommending that people out and about on a regular basis, meeting up with groups or attending indoor events to carry out regular tests using the rapid home test kits available free from pharmacies and other locations.

Swab Squads will be out across Sefton over the coming week, providing free lateral flow testing kits and vaccination information and advice. Details will be published on the Council’s [@SeftonCouncil](https://twitter.com/seftoncouncil) Twitter feed.

Mobile test units will be operating at locations in the Borough in December.
[Dates and locations here.](https://mysefton.co.uk/2021/11/29/mobile-testing-in-sefton-december-2021/)

Please continue to report any cases or outbreaks to the Community Infection Control Team on 0151 295 3036. The best way to prevent outbreaks is to continue with good hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and to continue using PPE as per the national guidance.

Information for Care Homes

This week we wrote to Care Home Managers separately about the development of the Care Home Strategic Partnership to build on the contact, mutual aid, and joint work over the past 21 months. We attached a draft Terms of Reference to our email to you this week, which we hope to discuss with you at the meeting of the Partnership on 14th December, 4.00 – 5.00pm. We do hope you will be able to attend this network meeting and be involved in this collaboration.

We would like to remind care homes that Round 2 of the Care Home Improvement Grants is available. We have sent some applicant packs out but if you like would a pack, please contact asc.development@sefton.gov.uk The deadline for round 2 applications is **17th December 2021.**

The Greater Manchester Infection Prevention & Control Cell will be hosting a webinar for Registered Home Managers on **Tuesday 7th December, 2pm-4pm.** An updated calendar invitation has been circulated – If you have not received the invitation please contact mark.brown7@nhs.net and he will resend (some outlook issues have blocked the invitation for some). Topics to include:

* Supporting staff wellbeing: A focus on drugs and alcohol
* Winter pressures and top tips for Christmas
* Essential Care Givers: Benefits for residents and care homes
* National Capacity Tracker
* Booster vaccination update

We also want to take this opportunity to share links to GM Resilience Hub webinar recordings referenced at our last webinar. The recordings are short (10 mins) and cover a range of wellbeing topics:

[Greater Manchester Resilience Hub - webinars and digital resources :: Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust](https://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/mcrhub-webinars)

**Workforce Recruitment and Retention grant**

We are still reviewing options to support the market and are anticipating decisions in latter part of next week and will keep you updated.

From us, all the Health and Care partners and Councillor Paul Cummins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, we would like to thank you and your staff once again for all your hard work and everything you are doing.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health



Fiona Taylor

Chief Officer, NHS South Sefton and NHS Southport and Formby CCGs