



## **News Bulletin for Community and Voluntary Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Partners and Hub Update Subscribers**

### **Community Support Hub Update from Dave Wraight, Hub Oversight**



As we move through the Government's Covid-19 Roadmap to Recovery, the Community Support Hub continues as an operation to respond to calls from the public for assistance, support and help. Since the start of this month (April 2021), the Hub has also been involved in contacting those who tested positive for Covid to offer support to maintain self isolation and to connect community support groups to those who are in need.

Now, as the acute pressure of the pandemic is starting to ease, and the requirement to shield for people considered Clinically Extremely Vulnerable has ceased, the role and function of the Hub is changing and evolving. Since the recent peak in December 2020 there has been a reduction of calls to the Hub of 65% to the present day, illustrating the impact of the falling number of cases, the vaccine and easing of restrictions.

We remain very grateful to the communities and groups in West Berkshire who have remained committed to supporting and helping those in need over the last year.

### **West Berkshire Council newsletters**

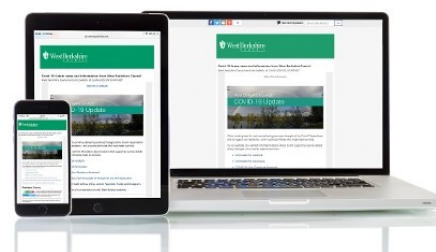
We encourage residents to sign up to receive our news direct to their inbox by visiting <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/37368/Newsletters>. We've included links to recent newsletters below for your reference.

**Covid-19 News** (including links to Coronavirus Weeknotes from our Leader and Chairman) – [30 April](#), [23 April](#), [16 April](#), [10 April](#)

**Residents' General News** – [28 April](#), [21 April](#), [14 April](#), [7 April](#)

**Environment news** – [29 April](#)

**Business news** – [15 April](#)



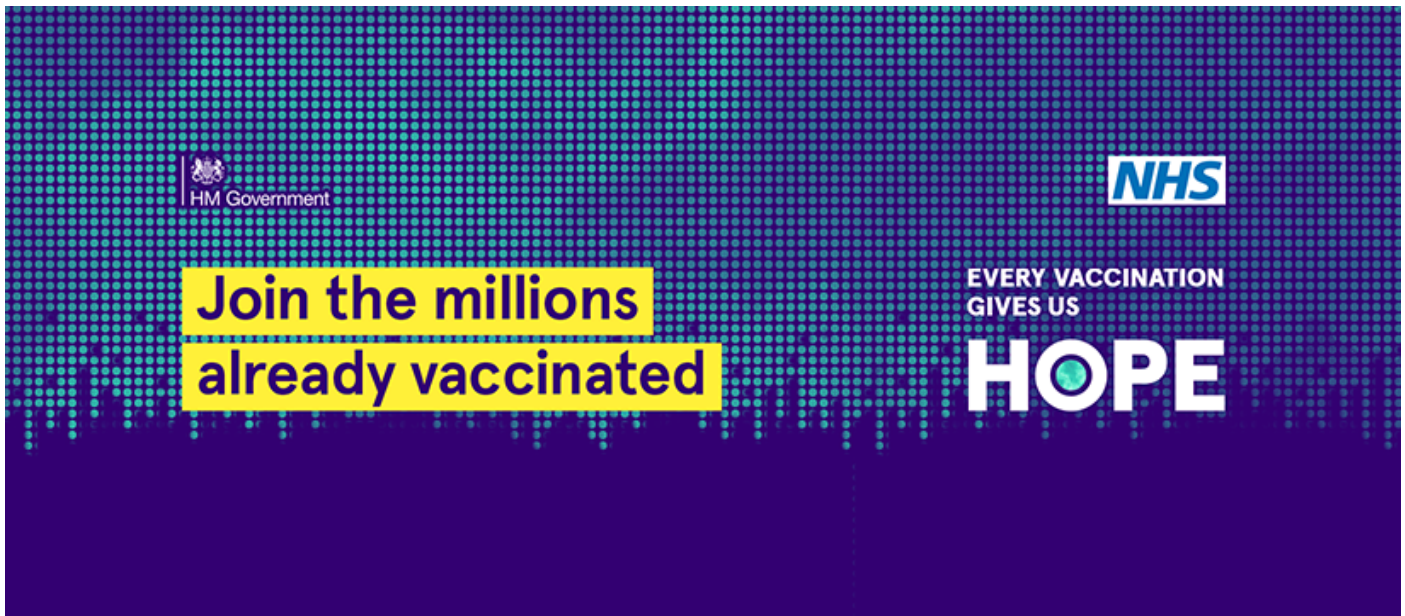
### **In this edition**

The following sections contain information and graphics to share with your communities:

- Covid-19 Vaccination Updates
- Covid testing
- Covid safety and information
- Other news

## Covid-19 Vaccination Updates

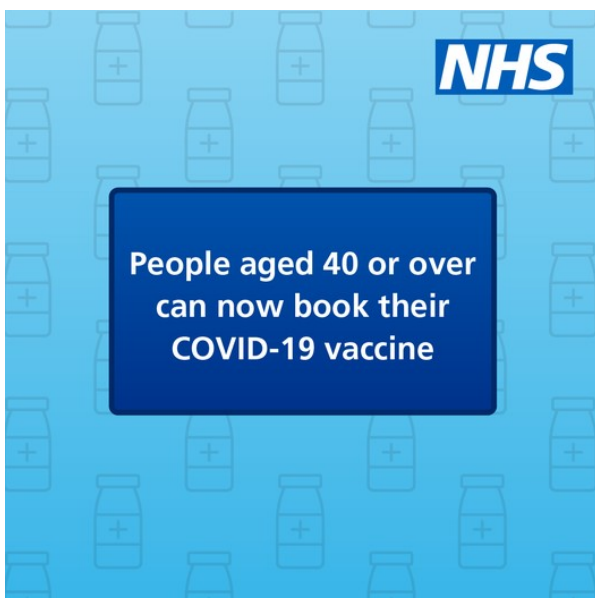
### Encouraging vaccine take-up



This week the Government has launched the 'Every vaccination gives us hope' campaign, to encourage under-50s to take up the offer of a COVID-19 vaccine during the second phase of the roll-out. The [adverts highlight the significant role the vaccine is playing](#) in preventing infections, hospitalisations and deaths, as we continue on the path back to recovery and re-set. The adverts will run across TV, radio, multicultural media, social media and billboards in prominent locations across the UK, and can be shared on your social media channels.

This comes as [a series of photographs have been published to mark the success of the vaccination programme to date](#), showcasing individuals and teams behind the rollout. Photojournalists Jude Palmer, Glenn Edward and Liam McBurney toured the UK over the past few months capturing intimate moments during the monumental national effort, creating a series of poignant, never-before-seen photographs, from care homes to cathedrals and museums to stadiums. The images provide an opportunity to look back on the programme, reflecting on the heroic efforts to protect those most vulnerable and look ahead to the second phase of the vaccination programme.

### Covid-19 vaccine is now open to those aged 40 and over



If you're aged 40 or over, or if you turn 40 before 1 July 2021, you can now book your COVID-19 vaccine:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

## Covid-19 vaccine advice for pregnant women



The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) confirmed that there have been no specific safety concerns identified with any COVID-19 vaccine in relation to pregnancy.

The JCVI is therefore advising that pregnant women should be offered the vaccine at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.

The JCVI also advised that it's preferable for pregnant women in the UK to be offered the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines where available. There is no evidence to suggest that other vaccines are unsafe for pregnant women, but more research is needed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-issues-new-advice-on-covid-19-vaccination-for-pregnant-women>



It is safe to have the Covid-19 vaccine if you are breastfeeding.

## Covid testing

### Lateral Flow Testing (rapid Covid-19 testing)

Rapid Covid-19 tests (also known as lateral flow tests) are now available for all, providing you do not have Covid symptoms. There are a number of ways to get the free tests - including from West Berkshire Council's community test sites, mobile collect van and participating pharmacies.

Find out more information:

<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/article/37815/Community-Testing-in-West-Berkshire-Lateral-Flow-Testing>

See NHS videos on how to self test:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVq7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

List of participating pharmacies (Pharmacy Collect):

<https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/findatestcenter.html>

## Visiting arrangements in care homes

This week (28 April), the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) updated the guidance on visiting arrangements in care homes to clarify that named visitors should be tested using rapid Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) on the day of every visit:

See guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/summary-of-guidance-for-visitors--2>

## Symptomatic Testing (if you are displaying symptoms of Covid-19)

If you are displaying any of the following symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- You've lost your sense of smell or taste, or it's changed

...then you should book a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test and not a lateral flow/home test.

For information on how to obtain or book a PCR test (either through your local PCR testing site which for West Berkshire is the Newbury Showground) or to receive a PCR test in the post, you should visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. This also contains helpful instructions on how to isolate, who is eligible for the test, and what additional support is available during your isolation period.

## Covid safety and information

### Enjoy the Bank Holiday safely

*Graphics and key messages to share with your communities:*



Enjoy the Bank Holiday safely. If you're meeting others outdoors, keep to a group of 6 or two households.



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## Celebrating Eid safely

Eid -Ul Fitr (Eid) is the first day after Ramadan (12 May –13 May) and is celebrated by Muslims performing a mid-morning prayer either at the Mosque or as a communal gathering in parks. COVID-19 regulations do not prevent such outdoor gatherings, but MHCLG has advised faith leaders that large events will inevitably carry risks and, if they are to proceed, must be managed in a way that minimises those risks.

If faith leaders do wish to arrange outdoor gatherings, please see the below suggested guidance from the Government:

- The gatherings should be COVID-19 Secure, consistent with guidance on outdoor events
- They should be modest in size to minimise risks
- To ensure social distancing requirements are respected, they should also be well stewarded
- Faith leaders planning events must carry out risk assessments
- Most importantly, any event should be planned and managed working in partnership with the owner of the space, the council, the local police and other local partners

Public Health England (PHE) recently published materials to support communications about COVID-19 vaccinations and Ramadan, including a set of posters and social media materials. A complete folder of Ramadan COVID-19 vaccination posters, infographics and GIFs is also available to download:

<https://publichealthengland-immunisati.app.box.com/s/oihiy7n1o6kp8sg6snzuwpu2dgg8zs6q/folder/135701014859>

<https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/ViewArticle.html?sp=Scovid19vaccinationsandramadansocialmediagifsandinfographics>

<https://publichealthengland-immunisati.app.box.com/s/oihiy7n1o6kp8sg6snzuwpu2dgg8zs6q>

## Wear a face covering where required

*Graphic and key messages to share with your communities:*



Please wear a face covering where required, unless you are exempt. Visors and shields alone don't adequately cover your nose and mouth, so can't filter airborne particles.

## Covid-19 Telephone Information Line

Please can you kindly continue to share the COVID-19 Telephone Information Line (01635 503788) for residents who do not access the internet to help keep them informed about the local position around Covid-19. Callers will be able to select their desired topic from an audio menu, or alternatively they will be able to request to speak to the Community Support Hub if the information that they need is not listed.

This phone line will be updated in line with changes to the Government's Covid-19 Roadmap out of lockdown.



West Berkshire  
**COVID-19**  
information  
telephone line

To hear pre-recorded messages about the roadmap out of lockdown and other COVID-19 issues, call the West Berkshire COVID-19 information telephone line.



**Call 01635 503788**

## Further information to share with your communities

### Take Part in Educafe's Community Survey

*Survey information to share:*

West Berkshire Council [has appointed Educafe as the new Support Agency](#) to help provide a voice for local diverse ethnic communities. The Council will work with Educafe to find the best ways to meet the needs of these communities.

Educafe has developed a short online survey to find out more about the things that matter to you and your family. Have your say by completing the survey here:

[https://form.jotform.com/EDUCAFE/ COMMUNITY SURVEY](https://form.jotform.com/EDUCAFE/COMMUNITY_SURVEY)



### Get Berkshire Active – Gentle exercise



Get Berkshire Active is still running their free seated exercise sessions, originally for those who were needing lower impact exercise with less mobility and now also for those working at home and seated for most of the day. [Find out more and see timetable.](#)

### Customers reminded to look out for their tax credits renewals packs

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has started to send out about 2.5 million annual renewals packs to tax credits customers. The packs will be sent out over the next six weeks and all customers should receive theirs by 4 June. HMRC recognises that many tax credits customers will have been affected by the pandemic and may have earned less money than in previous years. It is important that customers check the details contained in their annual renewal pack are correct, including income details. [See further information.](#)

### Check tradespeople credentials before hiring

The Public Protection Partnership asks homeowners to make checks when sourcing tradespeople via means such as social media. It's important for people to do their homework before engaging with any tradesperson and allowing them to work on their home and garden. [Read the top tips.](#)

### REMINDER: West Berkshire Energy Switch – Sign up to save on your energy bills

West Berkshire residents are being invited to sign up for the West Berkshire Collective Energy Switch and save on their energy bills. The scheme runs in partnership with Big Community Switch and offers a no-obligation collective energy switching scheme giving people the opportunity to group together and pay less for their energy. The registration deadline is 18 May. [Further information can be found here.](#)



### REMINDER: West Berkshire Mental Health Fund is open for applications



West Berkshire Council and Greenham Trust have jointly set up a £200,000 'Surviving to Thriving' fund. This fund is designed to enable voluntary and community sector organisations to apply for grants to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of local residents impacted by Covid-19. Grants of £500 to £30,000 will be awarded for successful applications.

[Read more information.](#)