

Community Covid Conversation 5 January 2021

Questions and Answers

Vaccinations

Q: What was the rate of take up for the vax at Muriel Street? Do you have separate figures for staff and residents?

A: We are still very early on with the roll-out, and the data is not available yet. The main focus with the care homes is to offer vaccination to the residents. Another care home has now been vaccinated, and by Tuesday we hope at least a further one. Anecdotal feedback is that take up among residents has been very high.

Q: We have community members talking about people having adverse reactions to the vaccination - is there any detail on this or ways to answer? Some members of the community are concerned about side effects of Vaccinations.

A: There are some side effects which some people experience – these include a sore arm where the needle went in, feeling tired, a headache, feeling achy, or feeling sick. These are usually mild. Thousands of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.

Q: How are people being contacted to be called for vaccinations - letter, phone?

A: At this stage hospitals are contacting their patients and staff and also running the care home vaccinations. GPs are contacting patients in the top priority groups as vaccines become available to the hub surgeries. They decide on the best means of contact.

Q: Will care workers get priority for vaccinations? We have five staff who deliver hot meals to vulnerable older people every day. The staff also bring older people to get their vaccines.

A: The priority list is determined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert body. The current priorities are here: [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation: advice on priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91143/jcvi-priorities-for-covid-19-vaccination.pdf)

Q: Will there be a choice on which vaccine to take?

A: The JCVI advice seems to indicate that there will not be.

Q: I was sent a probable scam Whtspp message today branded NHS but asking for bank details to book a test. Do you have messaging you can share so people know they will not be asked to pay for a vaccine and to be wary of scams

A: The NHS will never ask for your bank details, and everyone should always be cautious about requests asking for details such as bank details, passwords, etc. We can include messaging about this on vaccinations.

Q: Question from an elderly client: If you had the flu vaccine can you also get the COVID one too?

A: Yes. Lots of people who have had the flu vaccination a little earlier last year, have now had a COVID vaccination, too. There should be a seven day gap between having the flu vaccination and the COVID vaccination.

Q: Are we offering Vaccinations at home to those with mobility issues?

A: Yes. The NHS will be organising to vaccinate people at home who cannot get to vaccination centres.

Q: Is the Council looking for more community spaces for testing or for vaccinations? Can we not use the Community Centres as testing sites. People trust us more.

A: We have a very active programme looking for testing and vaccination sites across the borough and happy to know about more. Of course, we all depend on central government to get us the supplies for both. We will keep at it!

General Covid questions

Q: What is the tracing situation in the borough?

A: The national service tracks all cases, but then passes those it finds difficult to contact to us, and the We Are Islington team contact them. As a result, we have a good contact rate, which is in the range of 90-95%.

Q: How can you ensure that the Parents at primary schools socially distance?

A: We work closely with schools to get messages to parents, and where we are aware of problems do get Covid stewards to attend. Obviously the situation is changing as schools close, worth talking to local councillor about specific problems (places and dates needed) or emailing me (sue.lukes@islington.gov.uk)

Q: Can we make wearing mask mandatory in Islington?

A: Wearing masks indoors in public places, such as supermarkets and on public transport, is mandatory. We always promote face coverings as one part of prevention in our local messages. There are calls to widen the rules to include busy or crowded outdoor areas, among other places. It is important to recognise that maintaining social distance and reducing the amount of mixing/social contact, especially indoors, are the most effective preventive methods; face coverings are a mitigation when these other measures cannot be maintained.

Q. 2 metre rule – clarification on whether this is still the correct and safe distance

A: In summer last year the government issued guidance that two metres was desirable but between one and two metres could be appropriate in some situations. However, there is very strong advice from public health that maintaining two metres distance whenever possible is the safest thing to do. If you cannot maintain two metres, then you should wear a face covering over your nose and mouth, not get closer than one metre to others, and minimise the amount of time you are less than two metres away.

Q: What support for self-isolating, family members, when members have Covid19?

A: This very much depends on individual situations in relation to employment, welfare benefits, what other support is needed etc. Best thing is to encourage people to contact We Are Islington and say what they need.

Q: So does anyone know why the situation is so bad in Islington?

A: Islington has consistently been among the 25% of London boroughs with the lowest level of infections but the London situation is not good, and like at the national level, the situation is worsening, as we deal with the effects of the loosening of restrictions some weeks ago, the failure to close schools early enough (and not effectively enough as well), the failure to provide proper track and tracing systems with decent support for people who need to isolate. Many of our residents are already disadvantaged and the pandemic affects them disproportionately.

Volunteering

Q: Any volunteering opportunities available for testing centres, vaccination centres, lots of 18 pluses have just had their exams cancelled

A: Manor Gardens, Age UK and Help on your Doorstep with the co-ordination by Voluntary Action Islington, are all organising the volunteer stewarding for the clinics, the opportunity is on VAI for people to apply to.

Q: We need more foodbanks

A: We are pretty sure the whole borough is covered by food projects, but do tell us about any gaps. We help them get funding, supply some food, support them in many other ways.

Concerns

We need to be honest about what's happening in and around the hospitals. Reliable reports tell us that in East London people are dying in ambulances outside hospitals, in some hospitals ventilators and oxygen are having to be rationed.

A: At present none of this is true of local hospitals in north London, but they are under extreme pressure.

Q: Support for parents at home who are struggling to help children with home learning would be helpful. We support single Asian mums and we are worried about how women are dealing with this. I know schools are extremely pressured but if they are able to contact families who are falling behind on home learning that could really help.

A: Good idea: let's see what we can do!

Q: What is the IT poverty on local parents and pupils?

The council has worked hard with schools to get thousands of laptops and devices to children who did not have them. We are still concerned that people do not have access to wifi and/or data. So keeping an eye on it. Government has various schemes but we don't know how many families will get access to them.

Q: Plan for summer schools and activities for children and young people later in 2021. We need to ensure that when we come through this that youth and childrens out of school activities are supported/funding - get creative with it

A: Good idea! Let's work on it.

Communication

Q: I feel that the news and Islington could promote more positive information rather than just the negative information about deaths and cases confirmed. Highlight food banks, volunteers and so on

A: We are working with community leaders to share positive experiences of getting tested or vaccinated. Through Islington Life we have promoted positive stories. In the December edition there were positive articles including a two page article on the wonderful work voluntary organisations have been doing to support residents during the pandemic. Do take a look at:

https://issuu.com/islingtonlifemag/docs/islingtonlife_winter_2020_v3_final_issuu

Q: Could one of the messages for people reluctant about the vaccine be that if they don't have the jab, they are endangering themselves but also everyone else in their family. ie they are having it for everyone - not blaming but understanding.

A: We are working on tackling vaccine hesitancy and this may be part of it.

Q: Broadcasting and radio stations are very good ideas using different community languages

A: Please give us contacts for this!

General

Q: Is it possible to alternate times and days with weekly meetings, even if just changing one a month or so? I know a number of our staff and residents may struggle with the 5.15pm timing.

A: Notes from each meeting will be circulated and questions submitted in advance. We will review attendance and if necessary, look at offering the session at a different time.

Information to Share

Volunteering

From Marnie Rose

For volunteering opportunities after Easter with The Garden Classroom - working outdoors in natural spaces - please email Rosey Lyall at rosey@thegardenclassroom.org.uk

From Alex Manor Gardens

There are also a number of volunteer befriending schemes across the Borough, we have one at Manor Gardens, and Stuart Low Trust also have a good young people focused project

From Steph

A list of the MA wards with their email addresses are here
<https://islington.coronacorps.com/wards/>

From Missy - Tollington/Hillrise Mutual Aid

Tollington/Hillrise are always looking for more volunteers

Further information Mutual Aid groups can be found at:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/advice/voluntary-and-community-sector/key-information-for-mutual-aid-groups>

From Lucy Bingham

Holloway Neighbourhood Group also offer telephone support, and are always looking for more volunteers to make the calls. For more information go to: <http://www.hng.org.uk/>

Mental Health and Support

From Cllr Phil Graham

If anyone has any more suggestions on ways of helping with Mental health or you have services to offer please email me as Islington mental health champion
phil.graham@islington.gov.uk

From Jamad

For parents with children under 5, Brightstart Islington offers a lot activities please check their website: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/childrens-centres-and-under-5s>

From Savita, Help on Your Doorstep

Help on Your Doorstep also have a volunteer phone befriending service to support isolated residents. For more information: <https://www.helponyourdoorstep.com/>

Funding

Cloudesley's Small Grants Fund is currently open for applications. Eligible organisations can apply for a grant of up to £10,000 towards a project/work from March 2021 for up to 12-

months. Applicant organisations will need to be able to demonstrate how their project will bring about a significant health impact for its client group which complements statutory provision.

For this funding round, we are prioritising funding for projects/work with people who have been most badly affected by the impacts of Covid-19, including Black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, people living in poverty, as well as other groups disproportionately affected by coronavirus.

The deadline for applications is midday on Monday 18 January 2021. You can find out more information [here](#).