



Our current seven-day infection rate stands at 648 cases per 100,000 which continues to be above the England average of 274.1 per 100,000. Although we have now passed our highest peak from the second wave (4 January 2021) when rates were 542.2 per 100,000, rates are no longer the full story. We must also consider vaccine take up, the age range of those testing positive, hospital admissions and Covid-related deaths. People up to the age of 39 make up 77.81 per cent of current seven-day cases, while the over 60s make up less than five per cent. Hospital admissions are not increasing as quickly either, showing the positive impact of the vaccine programme. Currently, there are 34 coronavirus inpatients across County Durham and Darlington, with four in intensive care. In comparison, at the peak of admissions for the second wave (18 January 21), there were 237 inpatients. For the latest data in County Durham and your local area, please visit our [Covid dashboard](#).

Vaccinations

I am pleased to say that more than 82 per cent of our eligible population aged over 16 have now received their first dose of the vaccine. Over 64 per cent have received their second dose and 17 per cent are yet to be vaccinated. We continue to work with Durham University, with 250 people being vaccinated during last Friday's dedicated service at Maiden Castle Sports Centre. Vaccine appointments also remain available through GPs and we are on track to meet the national target of offering a vaccination appointment to all adults by the end of July.

We are currently working through guidance around offering a third dose of the vaccine, planning on the basis that Covid and flu vaccinations will be offered together, with special arrangements being made to vaccinate housebound residents, those in care settings and health and social care staff.

Infection rates and outbreak control

We continue to monitor the outbreak in Durham City and I am pleased to be able to tell you that recent data is showing an improved position. The majority of cases continue to be the Delta variant and although the infection rate remains high, it is now 8.4 per cent lower than the previous week. In the 19 to 24 age group, which has only very recently been eligible for vaccination, numbers of new cases continue to fall.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday, the Government has now released an updated [Covid response: Summer 2021](#). Confirmation of the lifting of restrictions and guidance will happen on Monday (12 July), following a review of the latest data. However, it is expected that limits on social contact, legal requirements for face coverings, working from home guidance and limits on numbers at weddings, funerals, concerts and sports events will all be removed. In addition, [updated guidance for schools](#) has been announced. From 16 August, children under the age of 18 will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact.

We will be reviewing all guidance as it is released and will adapt and share our outbreak management plans in preparation for 19 July. In the meantime, please continue to follow Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air, whether socialising indoors or outdoors. You should also continue to follow Covid secure measures in place at whatever setting you are in and consider taking a rapid lateral flow test before meeting up with others, as well as taking up the offer of the vaccine when you are invited to do so. The latest coronavirus information and guidance continues to be available online at www.durham.gov.uk/coronavirus.
