

Covid Update

Although, understandably, Covid has not been so prominent in the news, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that **1 in 16 people in England were infected with Covid last week.**

The government has removed almost all legal restrictions, preferring people to take personal responsibility.

Care home residents, **people aged 75 and over** and those with a weakened immune system aged 12 and over **will be invited to get a spring COVID-19 booster.** The NHS will contact you and invite you to book your spring booster when it's due.

Although you are not legally required to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19, you are advised to stay at home if you can and avoid contact with other people.

You do not have to take daily tests or be legally required to self-isolate following contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

The current dominant variant of Covid (Omicron BA.2) appears generally to cause less severe illness and also, with improved treatments, a smaller proportion of people are becoming seriously ill.

The situation locally: In South Lakeland, there were 798 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the week to 11th March increasing to 1113 in the week to 18th March (an increase of 39%). In Cumbria as a whole the figures increased from 3329 to 4937 (by 48%). Although Infections rates among over 70s in Cumbria remain lower than other age groups, it is increasing rapidly (by about 50% in the last week). The Chart below shows cases in Cumbria by age group in the last two weeks.

To reduce the risk of Covid-19 circulating among Gatesfield staff and tenants, we intend to maintain the following measures (at least while case rates are so high):

- 1. Urge all those eligible to take up the offer of the 'Spring Booster' vaccine when offered.**
- 2. Ask all staff to take a Lateral Flow Test regularly (preferably before arrival at Gatesfield).**
- 3. Ask all visitors (i.e. people not resident at Gatesfield) coming to the communal areas (e.g. for lunch or other reasons) to take a lateral flow test.**
- 4. Continue to encourage (and facilitate) all tenants to take lateral flow tests regularly.**
- 5. Encourage tenants to ask their visitors (i.e. people not resident at Gatesfield) coming to their flats to take a lateral flow test ahead of the visit.**

Gatesfield holds a modest stock of Lateral Flow Tests which are available for tenants and staff.

Weekly Summary: COVID-19 : New Cases by Age: Number and Rate Per 100,000 Population

Age Group	Previous Week No.	Previous Week Rate	Current Week No.	Current Week Rate	Numerical Weekly Change	Proportional Weekly Change
0-4	45	195	98	426	53	118
05-11 (Primary)	326	878	460	1239	134	41
12-18 (Secondary)	230	619	350	941	120	52
19 - 24	154	555	229	825	75	49
25-29	191	717	295	1107	104	54
30-39	516	983	736	1401	220	43
40-49	517	898	840	1459	323	62
50-59	585	748	817	1044	232	40
60-69	394	573	567	824	173	44
70-79	227	393	345	597	118	52
80+	143	432	199	601	56	39

Initial symptoms of Omicron can feel more like a common cold than was the case with earlier variants. If you feel ill and are in doubt about what to do, please phone the office or pull a cord and ask a member of staff.