

# DPH Annual Report – 2020

## Covid-19

## Introduction

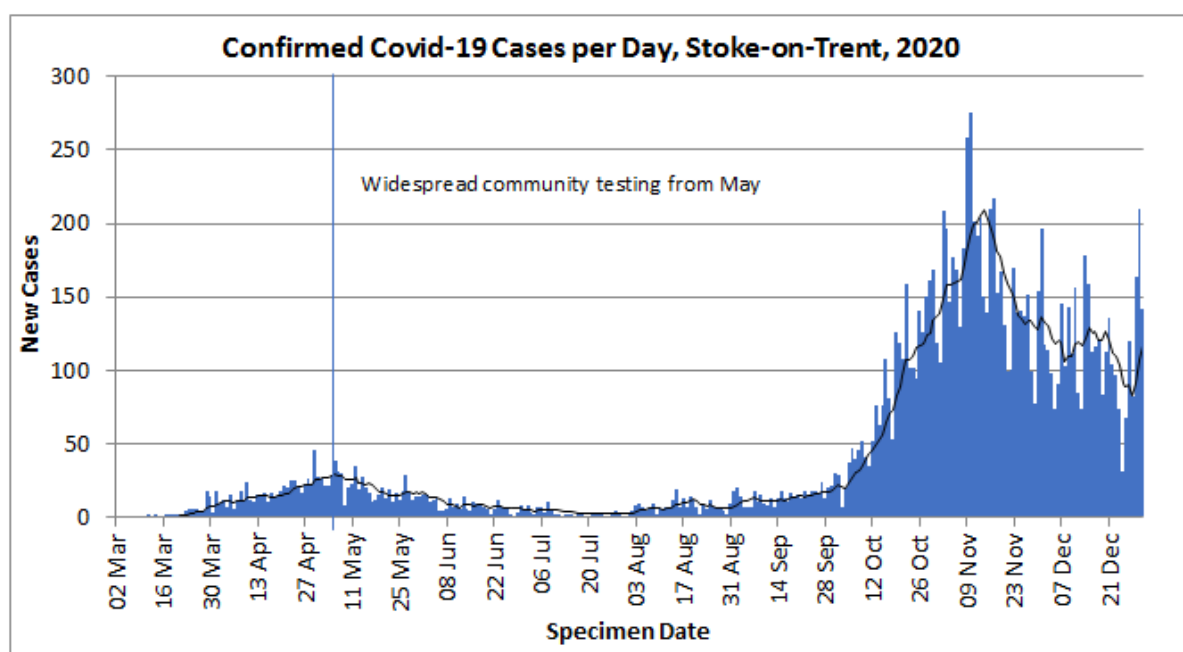
Directors of Public Health in England have a statutory duty to write an annual report outlining the health of their local population. During 2020, public health was the top of everyone's agenda as we responded to unprecedented challenges during the pandemic.

This 2020 DPH report is our opportunity to reflect on the impacts and experiences of Covid-19 during 2020 and reaffirm our commitment to improving the health of our city and reducing inequalities. The pandemic has highlighted inequalities in our city and as we move beyond the pandemic we are committed to ensuring we build back not only better, but fairer.

## The Pandemic in numbers

### Number of residents testing positive for Covid-19

13,196 Stoke-on-Trent residents, 5.2% of the population, tested positive for Covid-19 during 2020. The true number of people infected during the year is likely much higher than this, since testing was initially only available in hospitals and even as testing was made available for everyone people without symptoms may not have come forward for testing.



The first wave of identified cases in the city peaked at around 30 per day at the end of April 2020, a month after the first national lockdown began. By the time the lockdown was lifted in June 2020, daily cases had fallen to single digits. With further relaxation in national lockdown restrictions in August the city followed the national pattern of rising cases, growing steadily through September and increasing dramatically in October, leading to the announcement of a second national lockdown starting on 5<sup>th</sup> November. The second lockdown was effective in curbing transmission in the city, with new cases reaching their peak at over 200 per day in the week following lockdown before decreasing steadily for a month. Cases started to increase again after the lockdown was lifted at the

start of December, due in part to the spread of the more infectious “Kent” variant of the virus, building to a peak following Christmas.

In 2021, the extended third national lockdown steadily reduced the rate of new cases to around 20 per day by April 2021. As society opens up, maintaining social distancing, face coverings and hand washing remain crucial to avoiding future waves of the virus.

Analysing data to monitor and address potential health inequalities between groups – including by location, age, ethnicity, gender and deprivation – has been a central part of the City Council’s response to the pandemic. This information has been discussed each week to respond to outbreaks and target resources such as testing, support to businesses, Covid Stewards and public messages.

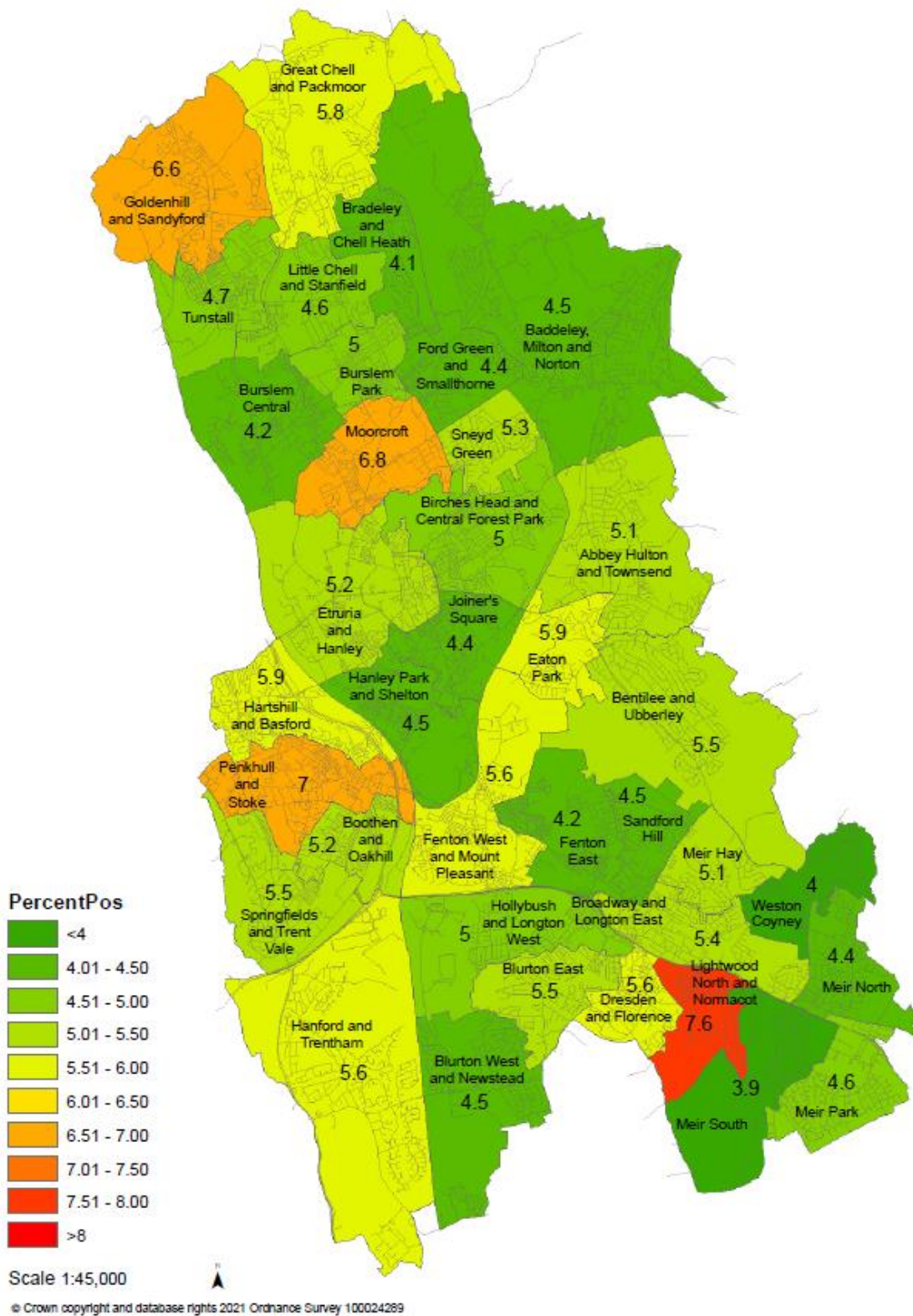
### Cases by Ward

The map overleaf shows the percentage of residents testing positive during 2020 by ward. In general, there have been hotspots and outbreaks in different areas during the pandemic but wards have experienced relatively similar case rates for the year as a whole, with the vast majority between 4% and 6%.

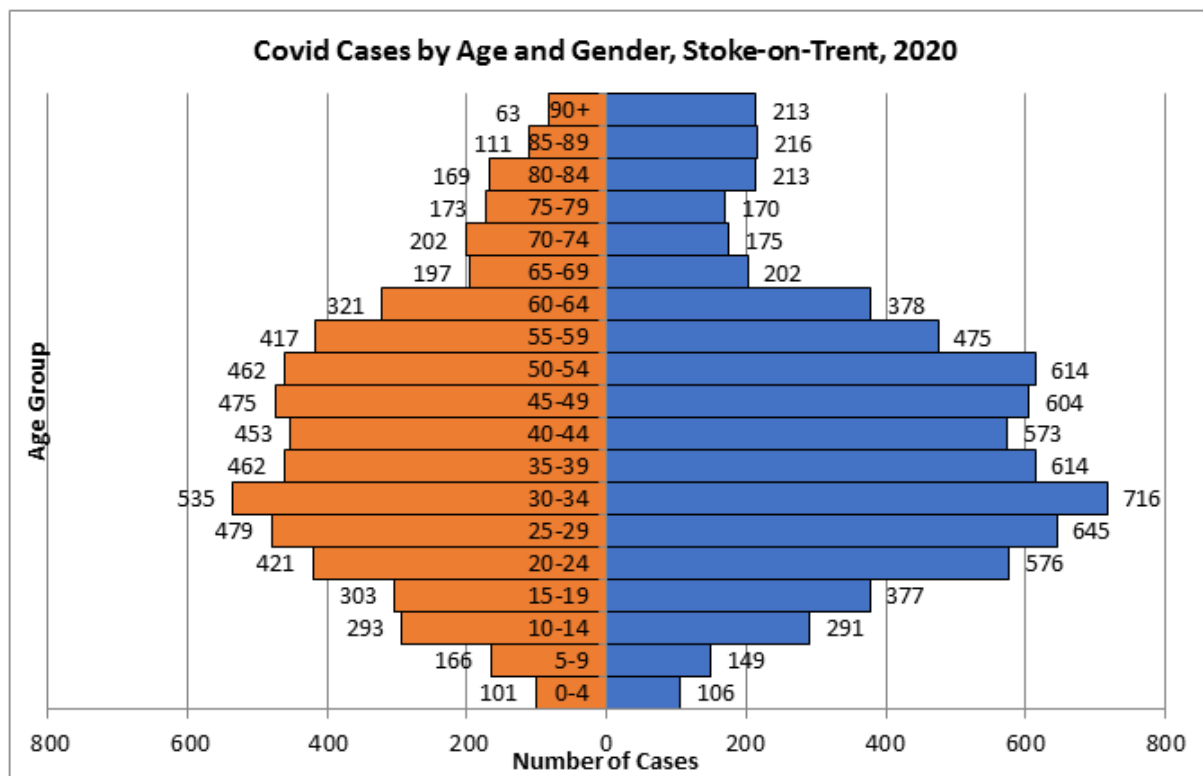
The ward with the highest rate of cases, Lightwood North and Normacot, experienced a community outbreak in August which accounted for a fifth of cases there during the year. The council’s response to this included distributing information door-to-door, setting up a testing facility in a local school and working with community leaders and businesses in the area to reduce the risk of transmission.

# Covid-19

## Percentage of Population Testing Positive during 2020

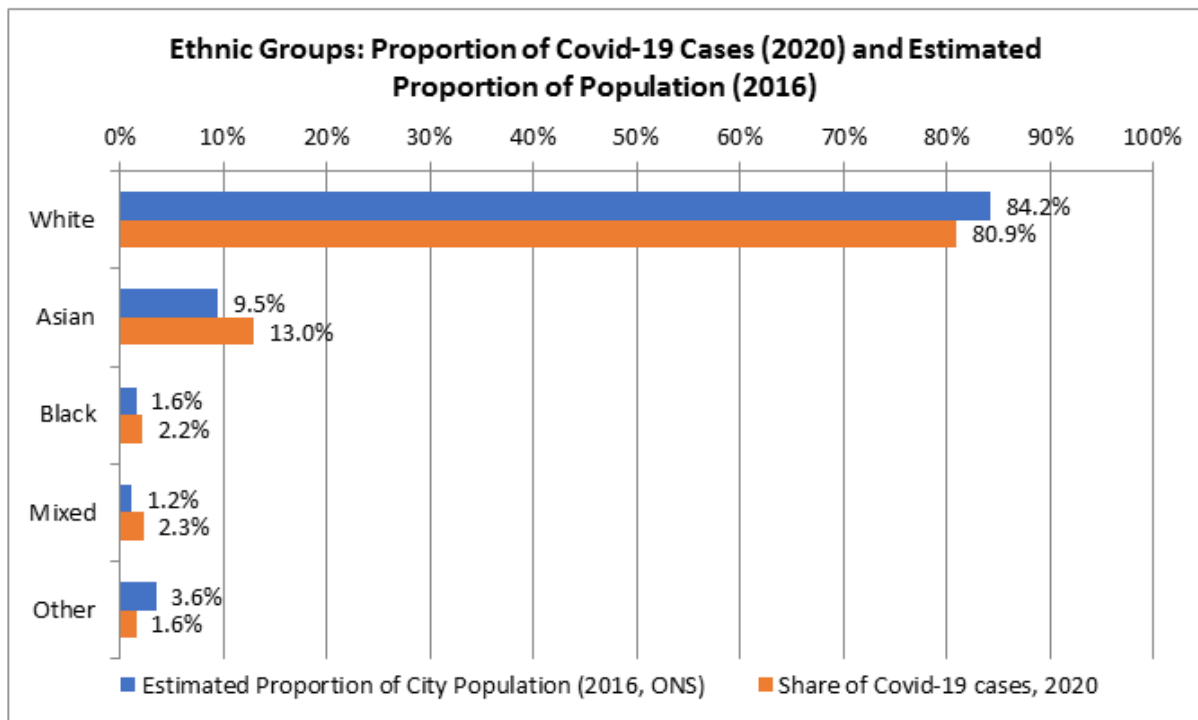


## Cases by Age and Gender



Throughout the pandemic, and especially during lockdowns, cases have been concentrated amongst people of working age, with 16-64 year olds making up 74% of cases. More cases have been detected amongst females, in part due to greater uptake of testing by this group.

## Cases by Ethnicity



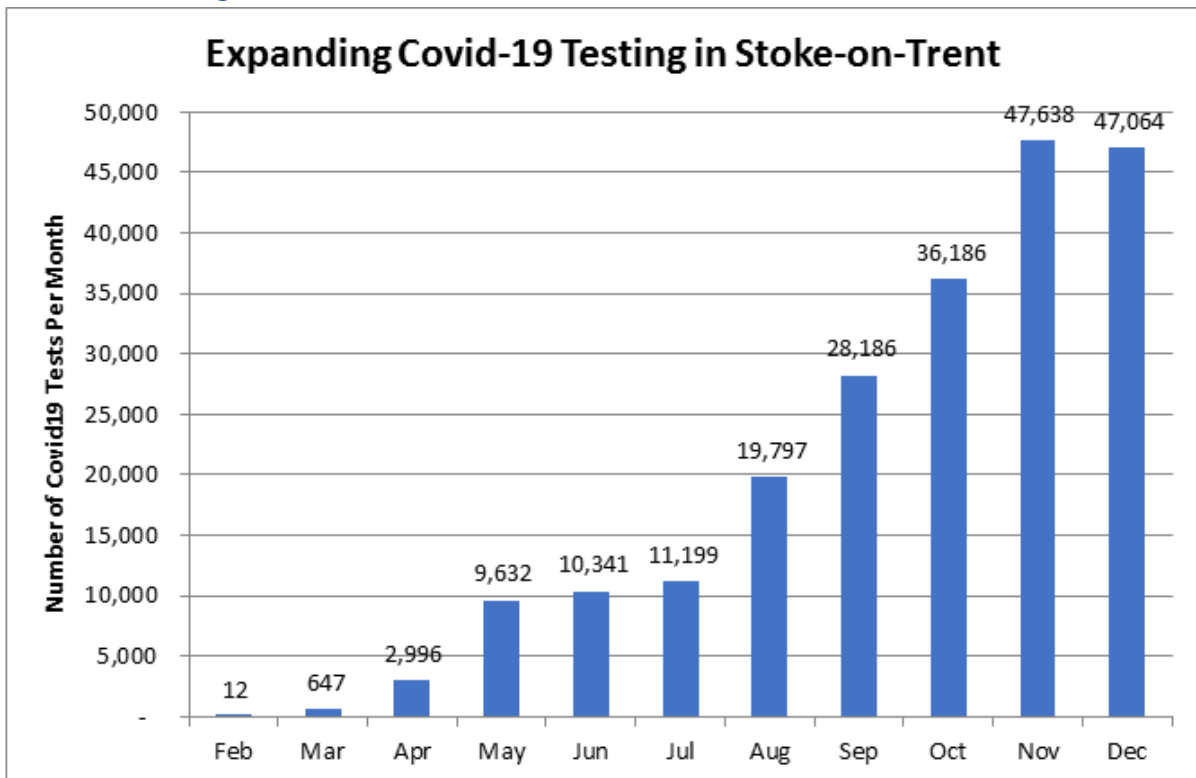
The above chart compares the proportion of Covid-19 cases during 2020 with a known ethnicity (86% of cases) with the latest available estimates of the proportion of each ethnic group in the city (ONS, 2016).

Although population change since 2016 and missing ethnicity data may account for some of the difference, it appears that people of White and Other ethnicities have experienced lower rates of Covid-19, while people of Asian, Black and Mixed ethnicities have suffered relatively high rates. Factors could include age (case rates have been lower amongst over-65s, which is a less ethnically diverse cohort), household composition, types of employment, health conditions and deprivation patterns. To reduce this health inequality, it is vital that all people continue to get tested regularly and come forward for their vaccine when invited.

## Cases by Deprivation

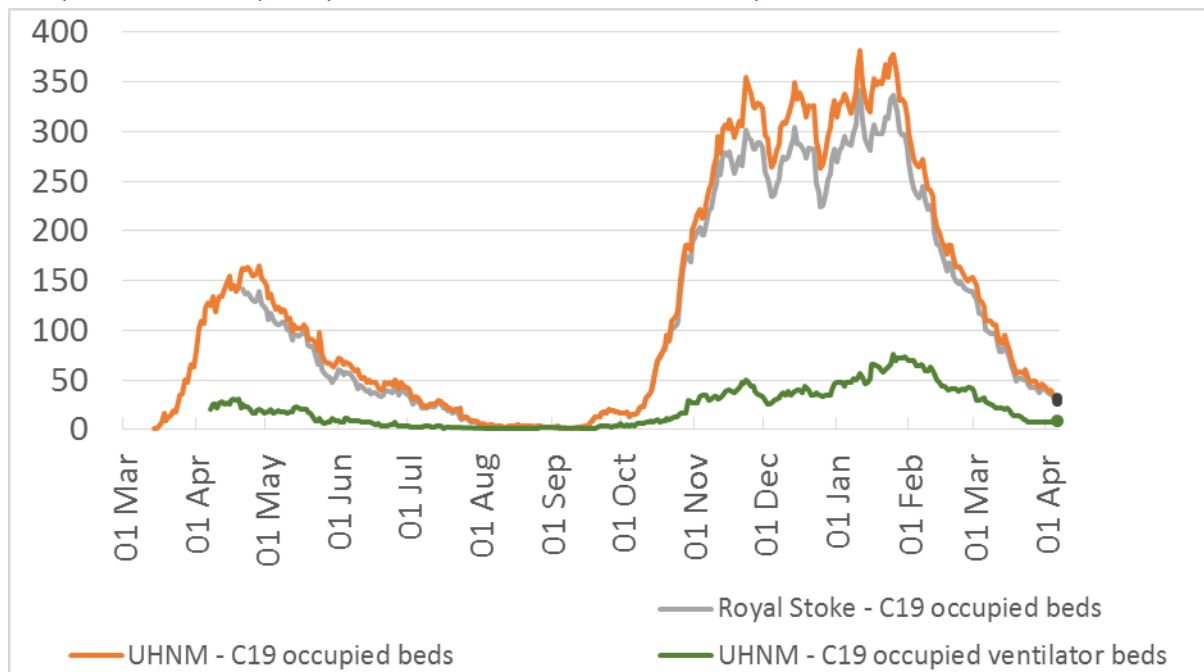
According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019), just over half of the city's residents (137,429) live in the most deprived "quintile", or fifth, of areas in the country. Deprivation was identified as a risk factor for Covid-19 transmission nationally. In the city, the most deprived group did not experience higher rates of Covid-19, although the second-most deprived quintile did, with around 5.4% of people testing positive during the year, compared to 4.8%-5.0% for other groups.

## Covid-19 Testing



In the early stages of the pandemic there was a very limited supply of Covid-19 tests. The City Council worked through the year to rollout an increasing number of test sites across the city and increase access to testing, using data to target groups and areas with lower testing rates or higher case rates.

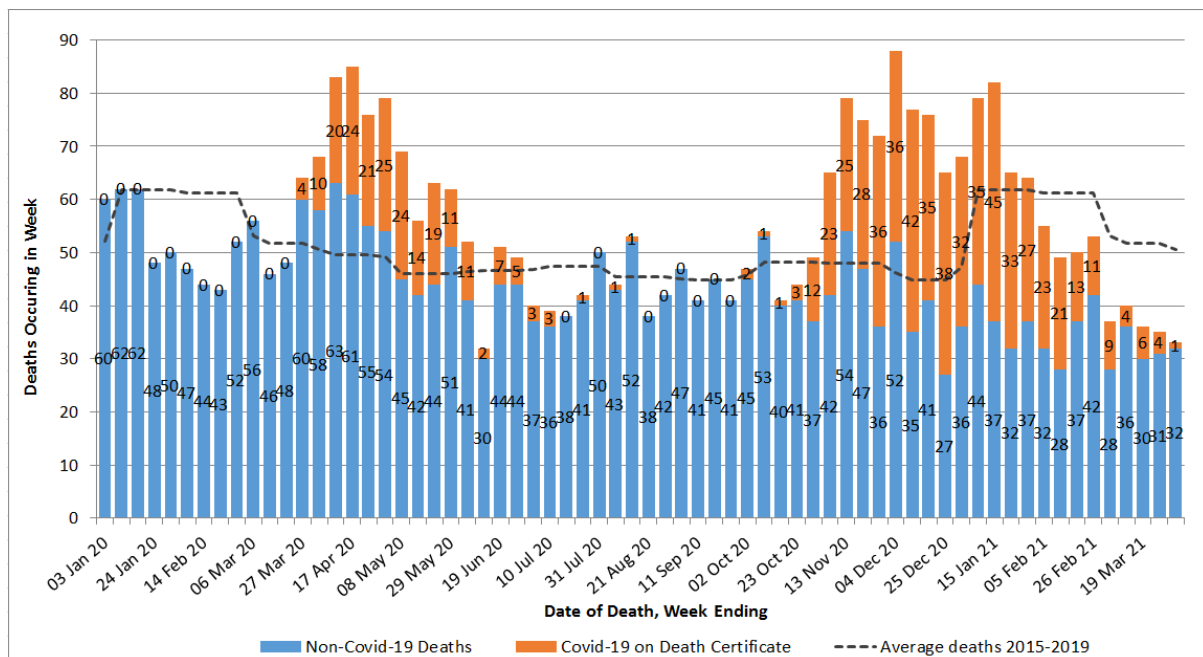
## Hospital bed occupancy for Covid 19, March 2020 – April 2021



The true impact of the first wave can be more easily seen in the numbers of people in hospital with Covid-19 at the University Hospitals of North Midlands, of which almost all were at the Royal Stoke University Hospital and a small number at Stafford's County Hospital. Patients of all ages have been

hospitalized with Covid-19 but it is especially older and more vulnerable people who have been most at risk. The proportion of these patients who were in ventilator beds has been closely monitored through the year and national lockdowns have been driven by the need to prevent the NHS becoming overwhelmed. During the second peak at the end of the year, there were more than twice as many people in hospital with Covid-19 than in April 2020 and the number of occupied ventilator beds rose above the usual maximum capacity as the hospital dealt with local cases and supported other areas. Each lockdown successfully reduced hospital occupancy, with level in April 2021 down to around 30.

### Total number of deaths by week



The dotted line on the chart shows the average weekly deaths for the time of year, with a usual winter peak and fewer deaths in summer. During the first and second waves of Covid-19 in the city, death rates rose above their usual level. Deaths shown as Covid-19 are those which mention the virus on the death certificate as a suspected main or contributory cause. There were 200 deaths above the five-year average (so called “excess deaths”) in April and May 2020. The higher than usual non-Covid-19 deaths during April 2020 also suggest that some cases may have been undetected due to lower testing capacity. From June to October deaths there were fewer deaths than usual before the second wave caused a further 240 excess deaths in November and December, all of which were now identified as involving Covid-19. For 2020 as a whole, there were 520 deaths linked to Covid-19 and 180 fewer non-Covid-19 deaths than usual, for a total of 340 excess deaths. As with hospital beds occupied, lockdowns have been successful in reducing the number of excess deaths.

## Strategic Leadership and Outbreak Management

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has led on a range of outbreak management and prevention activities during the pandemic, working closely with partners to help contain the spread of Covid-19. From a strategic perspective this included establishing and leading the new Stoke-on-Trent Covid-19 Local Health Protection Board and a countywide partnership Tactical Group. Relationships with partners were established at an early stage of the pandemic to ensure a joined-up approach and these relationships have strengthened through regular contact with partner agencies including the West Midlands Association of Directors of Public Health, WM Public Health England, Staffordshire County Council, the Staffordshire Borough Councils, Staffordshire Police, Civil Contingencies Unit, the voluntary sector, Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and NHS partners such as the Midlands Foundation Partnership Trust.

An overarching Stoke-on-Trent Local Outbreak Control Plan was established outlining the key priorities for outbreak prevention and management, such as contact tracing, communication, engagement and testing. The use of effective intelligence co-ordinated by the Public Health Intelligence team in partnership with colleagues has been crucial in terms of understanding the impact and spread of Covid-19 over time and to inform outbreak management.

From an operational perspective, a Covid-19 Cell was created to coordinate City Council activity including policy development, responding to enquiries in line with national guidance and coordinating meeting attendance and actions. A single point of contact was established to report outbreaks to the Covid-19 Cell, enabling liaison between partner agencies on specific outbreak intelligence and management. In addition to external partners, the Covid-19 Cell was supported by additional public health colleagues (Environmental Health and Trading Standards) and worked in partnership with wider City Council teams such as Adult Social Care, Children & Young People's Social Care, Education and Early Years, Housing Standards & Housing Solutions, Communications, Licensing, Corporate Health and Safety and our Covid Stewards. The Covid-19 Cell also provides administrative support to a range of meetings including a weekly Intelligence Group, Daily Task Meetings and Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and coordinates testing and contact tracing referrals.

Additional work by the Covid-19 Cell and wider colleagues to prevent and contain Covid-19 outbreaks included proactive engagement with settings such as schools, the local university and workplaces to share infection prevention and control good practice and answer queries. When necessary IMTs were called to share information and co-ordinate activities to respond to outbreaks and reduce further spread with public health representation providing advice and supporting actions as appropriate. Colleagues from across Stoke-on-Trent City Council trained as contact tracers to contact residents testing positive for Covid-19 for welfare checks, to share information on available support, to ensure self-isolation and to understand likely sources of transmission. The Covid-19 Cell worked closely with the newly established Covid-19 Stewards team to identify residents that may benefit from welfare visits and to confirm self-isolation when contact tracing calls had been unsuccessful. Throughout 2020 continuous improvement was undertaken to develop processes and procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to each phase of the pandemic.

## Welfare support

The City Council has worked closely with voluntary and community groups across the city to ensure that people receive support to stay safe during the pandemic through the Stoke-on-Trent Together project. This has included practical help with food and prescriptions, as well as befriending calls,

mental health support and activity packs for families. The City Council also undertook a programme of proactive calls, in many cases utilising redeployed staff, to anyone identified as potentially vulnerable as a result of the pandemic, including calls to everyone on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable register, blue badge holders, people who have assisted bin collections and older tenants in council accommodation. We provided a single point of access to support through a dedicated free phone number. Overall since March 2020 we have:

- Received over 14,400 calls asking for support – including out of hours and weekend provision
- Made over 120,000 proactive calls to vulnerable people
- Managed over 3,288 households access to emergency food
- Collected and delivered over 2,600 prescriptions
- Answered over 3,200 calls to the Mental Health support line managed by Brighter Futures
- Delivered regular newsletters to over 700 volunteers through our partners at VAST highlighting where support is available
- Provided over £500,000 in grant funding to support community and voluntary groups in local communities.

We plan to continue this service as long as restrictions remain in place and are working with our voluntary and community sector partners to ensure appropriate support remains as we move into the recovery phase, recognising that the pandemic may have a longer-term impact on the economic, social and physical well-being of our local residents.

## Sector Support Case Study: Care Home Resilience

The City Council has provided support to various sectors of the local economy, including education, adult care settings and workplaces. To illustrate this work, this section shows how Care Homes have been supported. Mitigating the impact of Covid-19 in Care Homes across the city continues to be a key priority for the health and care system. The City Council works closely with the Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in our joint effort to prevent and reduce cases and deaths from Covid-19 in care homes.

During 2020, daily system calls with key partners were held to track support offered and identify any further measures to contain and reduce outbreaks. A comprehensive database of all aspects of every Care Home proved invaluable in providing dedicated support to each setting.

Actions and support to protect care home residents and staff included help with training, staffing, additional payments to contribute to their Covid-19 response, a Sustainability Fund specifically for the Care Sector, and bespoke support to implement national guidance on safe practice and infection control.

Daily contact with all care providers - Care Homes, Home Care Agencies, Supported Living and Extra Care Schemes - ensured providers were up to date with the latest local and national guidance and information. This process allowed the City Council's Quality Assurance Team to act on any issues or concerns identified by providers quickly and step up the response if needed to the Care Home Support Team.

### Dedicated Care Home Support Team

Our Care Home Support Team, established in April 2020, provided support, advice, guidance and training to Care Homes in Stoke-on-Trent. Aligned to Primary Care Networks, the team has

supported each home to complete a comprehensive checklist and where necessary has commissioned additional assurance through support from University Hospital North Midlands and a follow up visit using the Care Excellence Framework.

Homes were rated according to PHE guidance. Initially we prioritised support to those homes that were rated 'red', before our focus shifted to a more preventative approach and the homes that were Covid-19 free. Any issues identified through visits were followed up or escalated ensuring areas including personal protective equipment (PPE), Infection Control and Prevention, Staffing and Testing are addressed.

The dedicated Care Home Support Team has been able to offer training to all homes visited including practical support on hand hygiene, waste management and PPE.

The Council and the CCG have ensured that there are sufficient trainers to resource the national "Train the Trainer" approach to infection prevention and control, with 10 trainers in place for Stoke-on-Trent. All homes have been trained or had their own training programme validated and Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust have been offering refresher training.

### Personal Protective Equipment and Equipment Supply

We responded early to the PPE supply challenge and to supplement emergency provision as "Provider of Last Resort" we were able to establish a 12-week supply of PPE to support both internal and commissioned services, providing more than 80,000 items of PPE to care providers.

Smaller local providers who did not acquire the level of PPE they needed as a consequence of the pandemic were supported financially through non-recurring funding as well as being able to apply for Sustainability funding if they are facing serious financial instability as a consequence of Covid-19. This has more recently been superseded by the availability of free PPE through a national portal.

### Workforce Support

The System Workforce Cell was initiated to support workforce deployment across the health and social care sector to those services facing staffing challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sickness absence and staffing levels in care homes are monitored daily and if staffing is seriously affected by the need for self-isolation the City Council and its partners can access short-term emergency support.

The Workforce Cell has been the conduit for additional staffing from the national "Bring Back to the NHS Campaign" and from across the area where people have offered to support health and social care services while furloughed or in addition to their day jobs. This enabled a reserve to be established with workforce who can be deployed across social care organisations.

After one of the most challenging years social care has ever faced as a sector, we continue to support Care Homes to prevent infection and mitigate against the spread of the virus. While 93% of residents in care homes have been vaccinated (March 2021), we must not become complacent.

### Mental Wellbeing

The City Council and Brighter Futures launched a 24-hour mental health helpline at the beginning of the second national coronavirus lockdown, which will continue until at least September 2021 to offer support to residents struggling with their mental health. As at the end of March 2021, the helpline had received a total of 23,244 calls from people needing support for their mental health with 555 of these being made by people who said they were feeling suicidal.

Call handlers from Brighter Futures provide callers with a safe space to talk about issues they are facing. They can then signpost callers to the most appropriate support service. Some of the most common issues people have called the helpline for support with include concerns about their mental health and worries about their physical health, relationship problems, feeling isolated and dealing with bereavement.

Brighter Futures have also been commissioned to establish suicide prevention community champions in areas across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

In 2020 a local #talksuicide campaign was launched, supported by MIND, aiming to contribute to a 10% reduction in suicides across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. So far 15 courses have been delivered by MIND (March 2021) with hundreds more sessions to be delivered in 2021.

The Loneliness Strategic Partnership has continued to meet online and has been a useful networking group for local organisations working with residents to tackle loneliness and isolation. An area of concern that was highlighted at the beginning of the pandemic by partners was digital exclusion for residents and The City Council and key partners are working together to find solutions to this issue.

## Children and Young People

A dedicated team was established to provide information, advice and support for all early years and educational settings, including childminders, nurseries, schools, colleges and alternative provision in the city. The core team from schools and early years support, public health's children and young people's team and health and safety have worked together with Public Health England, the Department for Education (DfE) and other local services such as school nursing, infection control, environmental health, communications and the covid stewards to support settings to effectively manage covid cases and outbreaks. This has enabled settings to have direct access 7 days a week to local, personal and friendly advice and support from staff they know and who know their setting, helping to resolve complex queries and manage any outbreaks. In addition to providing support as required by a setting, regular meetings have taken place to review issues and share knowledge, provide regular information and updates and an opportunity for issues or queries to be raised through both telephone calls and virtual meetings with settings as well as frequent email updates on changes to Covid guidance relevant to each setting.

The City Council also developed and shared key wellbeing messages for children and families, provided information, advice and guidance to schools to support with management of Covid including on PPE, prevention and control measures, contact tracing and isolation, training and setting up of testing programmes and access to vaccinations for those working closely with clinically extremely vulnerable children as well as getting covid messaging out to families.

In addition, the local authority and settings have been working together to support children and families with access to education through remote learning or educational packs/home learning activities; access to food parcels or vouchers for free school meals as well as links with activities and support services that are available to support wellbeing throughout the pandemic. Schools have maintained regular contact with children who are not in school and local authority staff have worked closely with schools where families have concerns or anxieties around school attendance due to Covid. The 0 – 19 service (including health visiting and school nursing) has continued to provide support and key development checks for children and families in the home, school or clinic settings alongside telephone support, video calls and chat health where young people can directly contact a school nurse for advice. Any vulnerable children or young people referred into or known to staff or

services continued to receive support through covid-secure visits at home, school or in the community, alongside telephone and video calls where face to face contact was not possible.

A range of Mental Health & Wellbeing training has also been offered to educational settings including Stay Well Training for staff (delivered virtually) and Mental Health First Aid (Youth). The DfE Wellbeing for Education Return programme is also being delivered by Changes and Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) in schools to support wellbeing on return to school.

Mental Health services have continued to provide vital support during the pandemic transitioning very rapidly to a remote/virtual offer at the start of the pandemic. The Stay Well service has continued to provide a wide range of Wellbeing Services for children and young people during the pandemic such as wellbeing sessions & groups including books, art and music themed activities for young people according to their interests. They have also offered on-line peer support groups, bite-sized cognitive behavioral therapy wellbeing programme sessions, a full menu of psychological education programmes, telephone support, bespoke parental support sessions for parents of children aged 5 – 7 years as well as the ‘speak up’ space platform for resources and links to other services, a parent support helpline and an instant messenger service where young people can access direct advice from a qualified counsellor.

## Leisure Services

In line with Government COVID-19 regulations Leisure Services entered phase 1 of national restrictions in March 2020 reducing the activities we could provide in our centres and community settings. However, physical activity became one of the limited reasons people could leave their home during lockdown and to support residents to benefit from this opportunity the service provided regular social media content including a programme of free online exercise classes, for our existing members and all local residents.

Our classes including high intensity sessions and a number to enable people with mobility and health challenges so that they too could remain active. Our virtual offer extended to support the summer’s Water Safety week with content shared with partners as part of the ‘Safe and Sound’ project for school aged children. During the summer of 2020 with the easing of restrictions Leisure reopened its centres and community pitches in a COVID-19 secure manner, using new technology provide by the ActiveStoke app to allow virtual booking of sessions.

During each phase of restrictions and easing, and as part of the council’s programme of staff redeployment, a large percentage of Leisure Service staff volunteered and quickly moved into a variety of frontline roles including Domiciliary Care, Bereavement Care and Coroner and Waste Services. As the pandemic progressed, staff from Leisure took up a primary role in the Test Trace and Isolate contact tracing and community testing programmes. The transferable skills and seven-day working established within leisure proved vital to our city’s response.

The experience of the pandemic is leading to new insights that have been applied to the core leisure business, to seek continuous improvement in its delivery. And, for some members of the team the experience which they gained during redeployment has seen them take up new employment with other departments within the council.

## Cultural Offer

During the lockdown periods The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery (PMAG) adapted to provide greater online content, which has continued into 2021. PMAG’s retail shop developed a Home

Learning Reward Bag for parents to purchase online for their children including a range of toys, craft activities and a certificate of achievement.

Recent online content included themed activity packages to celebrate Science Week, World Book Day and Mother's Day and an Easter package supported by an animated game, craft activities and short curatorial films highlighting our seasonal collections.

PMAG also hosted an online 'Spitfire Challenge' with students from Staffordshire University who were invited to explore ways to engage the next generation of designers and engineers by using the iconic aircraft as inspiration. Students were tasked to think about synthesizing community, learning, heritage and technology to provide a creative solution to engage visitors with activities and artefacts. Over two days, five teams worked together virtually, alongside tutorials from Visiting Professor of Innovation, The Spitfire Project and Associate Dean and Project Leads. The winners came up with the "Spitfire Gallery Pilot's Logbook" based on a WW2 logbook from the Battle of Britain. The concept includes activities about women in engineering and the life of Reginald Mitchell with the team designing accessible versions for people with visual impairments.

The museum was unable to host in-person Chinese New Year festivities, so an online range of activities was created for the public to celebrate at home. A section on the PMAG website included craft activities, past events, an animation of the Willow Pattern story, a selection of our Chinese ceramics and objects from the Jade and Ivory collections. PMAG also launched a children's competition to design a Willow Pattern plate and write a poem about the Chinese Zodiac animals. To celebrate Valentine's Day an online ticketed event was hosted exploring the 'Language of Love' through the meanings of flowers and gestures. Recently a series of short Sunday afternoon films has launched entitled 'Talking Treasures' with our curators with the first three uploaded have already had nearly 900 views.

During lockdown Gladstone Pottery Museum maintained an online presence with engaging activities for families to make and do at home. Gladstone also hosted the Great British Throw Down which was a huge success and was one of the locations chosen for a new film, The Colour Room, based on the life of Clarice Cliff. The museum also ran a call and collect shop offer throughout the second and third lockdown. Gladstone was able to welcome visitors for a period of two weeks before lockdown measures were re-introduced.

## Testing Program

During the pandemic local delivery of the Test and Trace programme in Stoke-on-Trent has been essential for the quick identification of infected individuals in the population and outbreaks to reduce transmission.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Tests have been deployed effectively within the city to manage outbreaks in key settings, including adult social care and businesses, to prevent further cases. Regional and Local Test Sites have offered PCR testing to members of the public experiencing the three main symptoms of Covid-19 or who are advised to seek testing by the City Council as part of outbreak management. In August 2020 PCR testing was successfully deployed at a greater scale using door to door testing in Normacot, containing a community outbreak and preventing further spread in the area and beyond. Strong community engagement, supported by expanded testing capacity at a local school, were key in successful management of this outbreak.

The City Council has been a national leader in Covid-19 testing delivery, being the second Local Authority in England to offer rapid Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) to residents. The City Council has

successfully built a Community Testing Programme with Community Partners towards an ambition of offering testing to 25,000 people per week in the city. We established 17 Community Testing Sites with a further 20 Community Pharmacies offering testing with capacity for 20,000 appointments open to members of the public each week. Using an intelligence-led approach we have placed community test sites and proactively targeted settings where we know Covid-19 transmission is higher or there is greater representation of population groups at greater risk of infection, health complications or death as a result of infection.

The Council used an innovative partnership testing model establishing testing in schools, early years providers, health and social care settings, businesses, homeless services and other essential provision in the city. This approach has enabled us to offer testing across 108 sites in the city to vulnerable population groups and those who have continued working throughout the pandemic, including more than 5,000 key workers. The Department of Health and Social Care has replicated elements of our community testing strategy in national testing programmes such as the Department for Education Test Programme in schools and Blue Light Services Testing Programme. We have used the Community Testing Programme as an opportunity to invest in local community partners and build social capital, offering funding to local organisations to deliver testing to their staff or members of the public in partnership with the Council.

We continue to be an early adopter of new Covid-19 Testing Programmes, such as the LFT Collect Programme to increase the availability and accessibility of testing. As we continue to respond during 2021 the City Council will work proactively with partners to promote Lateral Flow Testing to key groups and the public as a key strategy to safe return to normal activity alongside vaccinations and other control measures.

## Vaccinations

It has been the goal of every country since the pandemic started to develop a vaccination programme to reduce the spread of Covid-19. With modern technology, an ability to run large-scale trials involving significantly large populations affected by the virus, and an ability to mass produce vaccines at pace, it was possible to launch a national Covid-19 vaccination programme in December 2020.

The roll-out of the vaccination programme was accelerated by a decision made by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to increase the recommended period between first and second doses from 21 days to 12 weeks, ensuring that a greater proportion of the population benefited from the protection offered by the first dose.

The NHS has offered the Covid-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus, with an ambitious aim of vaccinating all the adult population by the end of July 2021. The vaccine is the best way to reduce the risk of catching Covid-19 and there has been extensive publicity both nationally and locally encouraging everyone who is eligible to get vaccinated. Across Stoke-on-Trent the vaccine is being offered in a range of vaccination sites, including GP-led sites, a large vaccination site at Tunstall, as well as the Royal Stoke Hospital and several pharmacies.

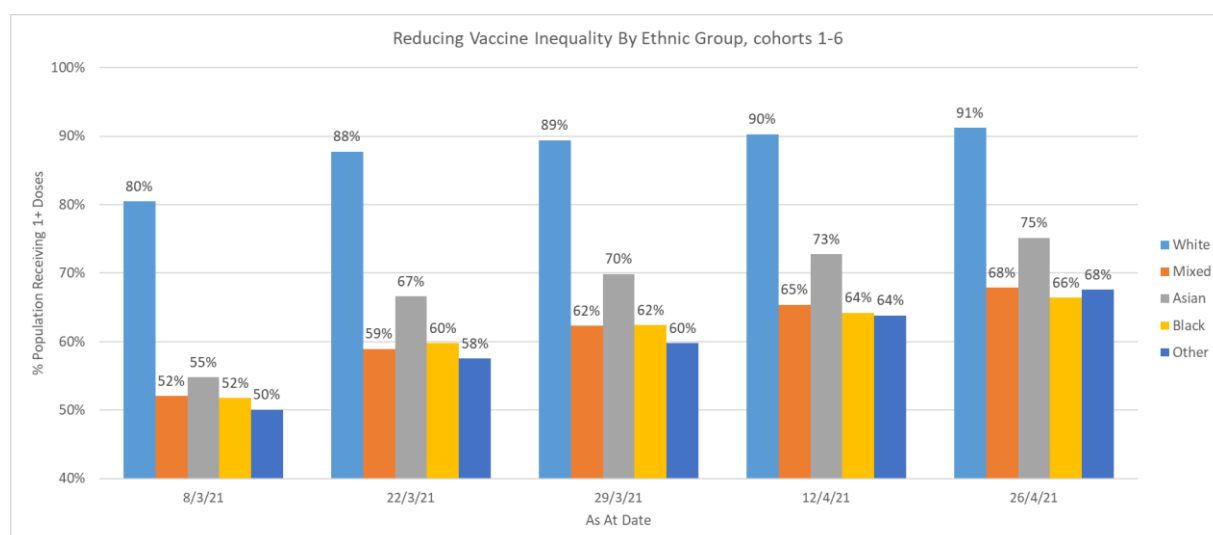
The order in which people have been offered the vaccine has been based on advice from the JCVI, including the following prioritised list:

1. people who live or work in care homes for older adults
2. people aged over 80 and frontline health and social care workers
3. people aged 75 and over

4. people aged 70 and over
5. people aged 65 and over
6. people aged 16 and over who are clinically extremely vulnerable
7. people aged 60 and over
8. people aged 55 and over
9. people aged 16 and over who are clinically vulnerable
10. people who get Carer's Allowance
11. all other adults, in descending age groups (50+, 40+, 30+, 18+).

Across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, the delivery and uptake of the vaccination programme has been one of the best in the country, largely down to the effective working relationships between the City Council, Local NHS organisations, and the voluntary sector, with support from the UK military. As of mid-April 2021, over 125,000 city residents had received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine. This included 87,000 people aged 50 or older, a 96% take-up amongst age groups that had been offered the vaccine to that point. 47,000 residents (52%) had received both doses.

Whilst largely successful, there have been particular challenges involving underserved communities, including certain ethnic groups, homeless people and people with learning difficulties. Through inter-agency working, including work with communities and leaders, Stoke-on-Trent has seen a marked improvement of uptake.



Despite this progress, vaccine uptake for cohorts 1-6 (over 65s and the clinically extremely vulnerable) remains lower for some ethnic groups, particularly people of Black (66%), Mixed (68%), Pakistani (70%) and "Other" (68%) ethnicities.

Of people with learning disabilities registered with Stoke-on-Trent GPs, 86% had received at least one vaccine dose by mid-April 2021. Over 120 homeless people had also been vaccinated.

The City Council will continue to promote the uptake of vaccinations across the whole population and is involved in developing an interagency group to ensure high levels of take up amongst all communities.

Looking to the rest of 2021 and beyond, the economic and health impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt and our focus will increasingly be on supporting recovery while being ready to deal with outbreaks and new variants that may appear. The City Council, its partners and the people of Stoke-on-Trent have responded to the challenge of the pandemic together. We must all protect

ourselves and each other by continuing to doing the right thing: getting tested regularly, getting vaccinated, and remembering, “Hands, face, space, fresh air”.