

NEXT 10 DAYS - KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Festive Fun Event – see pg. 4 for more details**

No key dates within the next 10 days, but upcoming events can also be viewed in the '[EVENTS CALENDAR](#)' within the Provider Zone.



Department
of Health &
Social Care

NON-ACUTE PPE CUSTOMER INSIGHT – UPDATE 2

Welcome our new monthly PPE primary care newsletter. We aim to provide you with key information on any issues or changes to products and services, as well as update you on any latest insights from our PPE customer panels.

To access, see attached document in the [Provider Zone](#).

COUNCIL PPE ORDERS

The deadline to make PPE orders from the council before the new year is 11am on Friday 17 December as after this date the contracts team are out of office until Tuesday 4 January. If you would like to make an order please contact liam.oneill@bradford.gov.uk

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR CARE HOME VISITING AND TESTING AND £300 MILLION TO RECRUIT AND REWARD STAFF

Please find attached in the [Provider Zone](#) a letter from the Minister for Care, Gillian Keegan, outlining key guidance changes. We kindly ask that you cascade this through your networks as soon as possible.

Extra measures have been announced to protect and support the adult social care sector this winter, including an additional £300 million to recruit and reward staff. The guidance on care home visiting and testing will also be updated in the coming days in response to the Omicron variant.

Please also see information on pg. 5/6 about daily rapid testing in the press release.

NEW GUIDANCE FOR BOOSTER VACCINATIONS

In response to concerns about the new Omicron variant, the JCVI has recommended that booster vaccinations should be offered to **all** adults and that the gap between the second dose and booster is reduced to a minimum of **3 months**. People who are severely immunosuppressed and have had their 3rd dose will also be offered a booster, a minimum of 3 months after their third dose.

These recommendations will come into effect from **13 December**. As before, people will be prioritised according to age and risk, and **the NHS will contact you when it is your turn for your booster**. If you are aged 40 or over or in an at risk group and had your second dose 6 months ago, you can book your booster now at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccine or by calling 119. Otherwise, please wait to be contacted.

Please do not contact your GP practice for an appointment. Not all practices will be offering boosters so you will need to wait for an invitation or your age group to be announced before you can book your booster.

What does this mean for social care?

Residents in care homes are more likely to suffer serious health consequences if they become infected with COVID-19. The latest data indicates that the Omicron variant may be more **transmissible**, with infections doubling every 2-3 days. Protecting both residents and staff is a priority, the booster vaccine has been recommended for **ALL** adults.

This is part of the national plan to combat the spread and severity of the Omicron variant, please continue to encourage all staff and residents to receive their booster vaccinations if they haven't done so already.

How and when to get your COVID-19 booster dose

If you're eligible, you'll be offered a booster dose at least 3 months after you had your 2nd dose. Most people can:

- book a vaccination appointment online for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy
- go to a walk-in vaccination site to get vaccinated without needing an appointment
- wait to be contacted by a local NHS service such as a GP surgery and book an appointment with them
- You can find more information on how to book your booster vaccine here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-booster-vaccine/>

IPC fund and a reminder to update the Capacity Tracker

We are still continuing to support providers with the IPC fund to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Just a reminder that, in order to receive funding, care providers will be required to have completed the Capacity Tracker at least twice (2 consecutive weeks), and have committed to completing the tracker at least once per week until the conclusion of the fund.

SENT ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE AND NHSX

14 December 2021: the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is issuing an urgent note setting out the current situation and advice on a critical cyber vulnerability, CVE-2021-44228, also known as Log4Shell or Logjam.

We ask that all adult social care providers, and all those running or providing digital services in the sector consider the information below and act accordingly.

What is happening?

A vulnerability has been found within Apache Foundation Log4j2 ('Log4j2') that could enable attackers to access IT systems from where they could deploy cyber attacks such as ransomware. This is a global vulnerability which will be important for many organisations around the world to address.

The vulnerability is almost certain to be in most, if not all organisations in some way. Although we are as yet unaware of any incidents in health or care, cyber criminals are scanning for this vulnerability. This means the cyber criminals are conducting reconnaissance, so they are taking a look to see which organisations have the vulnerability and where those vulnerabilities are.

What is Log4j2 and how does the vulnerability work?

Log4j2 is used by software developers as they create applications. It processes logs of activity and is embedded into many systems, including those in use in adult social care. It is highly likely that most, if not all, IT and digital systems used by adult social care providers will be affected.

Why does it matter?

Our ultimate concern is that attackers may seek to use the vulnerability in Log4j2 to encrypt or damage your digital systems, such as your digital care plans. Furthermore, after gaining access

confidential sensitive or financial data can be stolen and potentially sold on-line. Cyber attackers could also hold you to ransom in what is known as a 'ransomware attack'.

What should you do about it?

Notify your IT team or the person responsible for IT, and ensure actions are taken. We suggest the following:

- Check your digital suppliers' website and follow their advice about mitigating cyber vulnerabilities. In this case, the most important action is to install the latest version as soon as practicable.
- If your software suppliers do not have guidance, you may wish to contact them and ensure they are acting accordingly, and scanning for Log4j2 vulnerabilities in particular.
- Your Local Support Organisation, through DSC's Better Security, Better Care Programme, will be on-call to help or escalate issues you have. This may be especially helpful if you do not have IT support.
- For technical advice and further details, you may find the following updates and guidance useful: [National Cyber Security Centre \(NCSC\)](#), [NHS Digital](#), [Microsoft](#).
- If there are any indications of a compromise, please report this as soon as possible to the NCSC via <https://report.ncsc.gov.uk/>.
- Follow Digital Social Care on Twitter for sector-specific and relevant updates. Digital Social Care will continue to update this story: <https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/urgent-critical-cyber-vulnerability-alert/>

We also strongly encourage you to use this alert, to review your continuity plans, run a data back-up, and consider purchasing cyber insurance, if you have not done any of those recently.



FESTIVE FUN



Digital Eagles – Guide To Entertainment

Learn how you can still experience the magic of the festive season in Care. We'll show you how you can: stay in touch with your local community, have fun with the people you love, and stream festive events, all while helping you stay safe online.

Including how to:

- Live stream festive concerts, performances and faith services
- Set the scene use online videos like log fires or fireworks
- Find inspiration online for festive crafts and activities
- Enjoy virtual family fun with festive filters and online games.

Testimonial (Joanne Driscoll, Elderthorpe)

Feedback on the Festive Fun meeting which 2 of our staff have just attended was they thought it was brilliant! There was some lovely ideas and reminders of activities to do with residents, and staff also, which they both felt will help with staff morale.

Would highly recommend.

Ps. I know time is precious but it's only an hour

Tuesday 14th & 21st
December – 1:30-
14:30 pm

Thursday 9th & 16th
December – 10:30-
11:30am

EVENT BOOKING

[Click here to get your FREE TICKET from EventBrite.](#)

If having any problems booking your place please email admin@bradfordcareassociation.org



DAILY RAPID TESTING FOR COVID-19 CONTACTS LAUNCHES THIS WEEK

- From Tuesday, fully vaccinated contacts of a COVID-19 case should take a daily LFD test for seven days to slow the spread of the virus
- Those who test positive or develop symptoms will need to self-isolate
- Unvaccinated adults must continue to self-isolate for 10 days if they are a contact of someone with COVID-19
- It follows a significant rise in Omicron cases in the UK with the new variant expected to become the dominant strain by mid-December

From Tuesday 14 December, people who are fully vaccinated and identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take an NHS rapid lateral flow test every day for seven days to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

The practical move comes as Omicron infections are rising significantly in the UK and it is expected to become the dominant strain in the UK by mid-December. It aims to reduce pressures on people's everyday lives by replacing the requirement for Omicron contacts to isolate for 10 days, while protecting the public by identifying asymptomatic cases and stopping the chains of transmission. Testing daily will also help us understand how and where the virus is spreading.

Close contacts of people who test positive are at higher risk of getting COVID-19 and, with one in three people asymptomatic, daily testing will help ensure people are not unknowingly passing the virus on to others.

As now, anyone whose rapid test comes back positive or who develops COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and take a confirmatory PCR test to verify the result. If the PCR result comes back positive, contacts must self-isolate for 10 days from the day they took the positive rapid test or developed symptoms. They do not need to continue taking rapid tests during that 10 day isolation period. If the PCR result comes back negative, contacts can leave self-isolation but should continue to take rapid tests for the remainder of the 7 days.

Anyone identified as a contact with a negative LFD is strongly advised to limit close contact with other people outside their household, especially in crowded or enclosed spaces and with anyone who is more vulnerable. They should also follow government guidance on wearing a face covering and working from home where possible.

Unvaccinated adults are not eligible for this new daily testing policy, they must self-isolate for 10 days if they are a contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 - Omicron or not - unless eligible for an existing workplace daily contact testing.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

“The Omicron variant is quickly gaining ground in the UK and is expected to become the dominant strain by mid-December. We are taking this proportionate and more practical measure to limit the impact on people's day to day lives while helping to reduce the spread of Omicron. Vaccines remain our best defence and I urge anyone yet to get a first and second jab to come forward and those eligible for a booster to get boosted as soon as possible.”

Dr Jenny Harries, UKHSA CEO said:

“If you are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19, taking a rapid daily test - and only needing to isolate if it is positive - will help reduce the spread of the virus and minimise its impact on our everyday lives over the coming weeks and months. Rapid tests are freely available in pharmacies and online. Our latest analysis shows that boosters provide the best protection against the Omicron variant, please go forward when you are called. If you haven't had any vaccine, a first and second dose still gives you protection against becoming seriously unwell. Don't worry about stepping forwards now – you will be warmly welcomed by our vaccination staff and I would strongly advise you to get vaccinated as soon as possible.”

People will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace by phone, email or text or they will receive a notification from the NHS COVID-19 app to tell them they are a contact of someone who tested positive and what action they need to take.

They will be advised to get a box of 7 lateral flow tests free of charge from NHS Test and Trace either through pharmacies, schools or home delivery by ordering online. People are encouraged to use the tests they already have at home before ordering more. People should take these tests from the day they are notified as being a contact and report their results to NHS Test and Trace on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) or by calling 119.

Testing with isolation remains a vital tool in controlling the spread of Omicron given how quickly it passes from person to person. Extensive clinical evaluation shows lateral flow tests are accurate and sensitive enough to be used in the community and detect 80-90% people that are highly infectious very quickly, so more people who are at a high likelihood of spreading the virus isolate and prevent the variant from spreading to others.

The Prime Minister confirmed on Wednesday 8 December that England will move to Plan B following the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in the UK. This means people are advised to work from home where possible and face coverings are compulsory in most indoor venues, such as cinemas, theatres and places of worship.

The UK Health Security Agency published preliminary data on Friday showing COVID-19 booster vaccines provide around 70 to 75 per cent protection against symptomatic infection from the Omicron variant. The data showed that two doses of AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines alone provided much lower levels of protection against symptomatic infection compared to the protection that they provide against Delta, stressing the importance of people getting their booster jabs.

The Government and NHS have expanded the booster programme to all adults and all over-18s in England will be offered a top-up dose by the end of January. People aged 30 and over will be invited to book from Monday 13 December and the NHS will invite younger people in due course in order of age.

To speed up the booster programme, around 450 military personnel have been drafted in to support deployment, with 1,500 community pharmacy sites, additional hospital hubs, and pop-up sites opening in convenient locations across the country. Extra financial support to GPs, community pharmacies and primary care staff will help boost capacity and encourage more visits to those who are housebound.



ALTURA
learning

2022 NEW COURSE RELEASES

Every year our Learning and Development team reviews our course libraries to ensure that the courses are still relevant and reflect best practice. With Altura Learning you can be assured that any course your employees have access to meets the latest industry standards and legislation, and is relevant and engaging. The above link includes a list of all the courses that will be retiring in 2022, when they will retire and, where available, what course will replace them.

To view our complete list of courses, please click on the relevant library below.

- [RESIDENTIAL CARE COURSE LIBRARY](#)
- [HOME CARE COURSE LIBRARY](#)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Customer Service Team at customerservice.eu@alturalearning.com

Our Christmas closure dates

Please note that our office will be closed from Friday 24th December 2021 and reopening on Tuesday 4th January 2022. As always you can receive 24/7 support from Bridge by calling 0808 169 9549.

DO NOT ATTEMPT CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (DNACPR) – NEW RESOURCES

Skills for Care have developed a range of guidance and best practice resources to support the social care workforce use DNACPRs to support people's treatment and preferences. These resources also support some of the key findings and recommendations from the Care Quality Commission's report Protect Respect and Connect.

[Find out more and view the resources](#)