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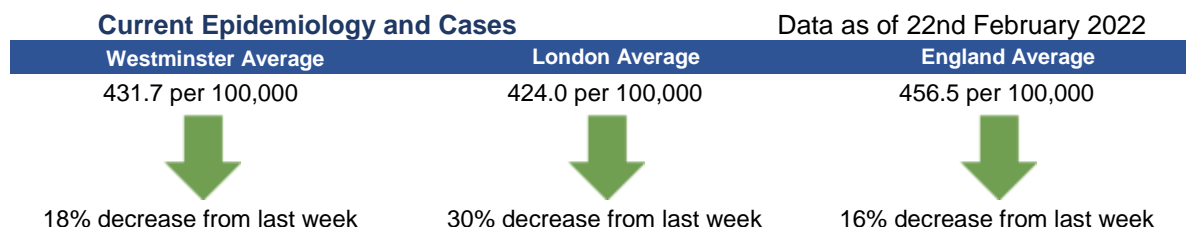
Title: Covid Update

Report of: Director of Public Health

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1. COVID-19 Update

- 1.1 Case rates in the borough are down by 18% compared to last week, continuing the new downward trend seen across London. Westminster rates are above the London average, and the borough currently has the 5th highest case rate in London. Positivity rates are also decreasing with 7.7% of tests positive.
- 1.2 The latest data from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection survey (testing everyone in the sample, regardless of whether they report they are experiencing symptoms) shows that: In London and England the percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus decreased in the week ending 18 February 2022. It is estimated that 1 in 20 people had covid.



- 1.3 On the 21 February, the Government published its [Living with Covid-19 plan](#). This plan - underpinned by vaccines - will remove the remaining legal domestic restrictions while continuing to protect people most vulnerable to COVID-19 and maintaining resilience. The Government's objective in the next phase of the COVID-19 response is to enable the country to manage COVID-19 like other respiratory illnesses, while minimising mortality and retaining the ability to respond if a new variant emerges with more dangerous properties than the Omicron variant, or during periods of waning immunity.
- 1.4 To meet this objective, the Government will structure its ongoing response around four principles:
- Living with COVID-19:** removing domestic restrictions while encouraging safer behaviours through public health advice, in common with longstanding ways of managing most other respiratory illnesses;
 - Protecting people most vulnerable to COVID-19:** vaccination guided by Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice, and deploying targeted testing;
 - Maintaining resilience:** ongoing surveillance, contingency planning and the ability to reintroduce key capabilities such as mass vaccination and testing in an emergency;

- d. **Securing innovations and opportunities** from the COVID-19 response, including investment in life sciences.

1.5 **From 24 February:**

- The legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test is removed. Adults and children who test positive will continue to be advised to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.
- Fully vaccinated close contacts of positive COVID cases and those aged under 18 will no longer be asked to test daily for 7 days.
- It will no longer be a legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate.
- Self-isolation support payments and national funding for practical support ends.
- Contact tracing will end, you will no longer be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to inform you if you were near someone who tested positive for COVID.
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations are revoked. Local authorities will continue to manage local outbreaks of COVID-19 in high risk settings as they do with other infectious diseases.

- 1.6 **From 24 March**, the COVID-19 provisions within Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance regulations will end. People with COVID-19 may still be eligible, subject to the normal conditions of entitlement.

- 1.7 **From 1 April**, the Government will update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to minimise contact with other people. Additional steps include:

- Removing the current guidance on voluntary COVID-status certification in domestic settings and no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.
- No longer providing free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.
- Removing the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments.

- 1.8 The Government has signalled its intention to revoke the mandatory vaccination for both health and social care staff. Instead, the Government is likely to ask professional regulators such as the Care Quality Commission to review how the responsibility for vaccination could be strengthened through guidance.

- 1.9 Vaccination is still recommended as a professional responsibility for health and care staff, but is not likely to be a legal requirement going forward. However, until revoked the 2021 VCOD legislation remains in situ and anyone entering a Care Home as part of deployment (non-emergency business requirement to attend Care Homes) will be required to demonstrate that they are fully vaccinated.

2. **Supporting the CCG with the Rollout of COVID-19 Vaccinations**

- 2.1 Data from NHS England states that 55% of Westminster residents over the age of 12 have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. 38% of borough residents have received their booster vaccination, bringing our total number of boosters delivered to residents to 103,000.

- 2.2 Vaccinations continue to be available through local clinics, pop ups, schools and pharmacies. The latest offer is summarised on the [Westminster City Council website](#).
- 2.3 Vaccinations for children aged 5 to 11 who are deemed to be Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) went live from Monday 31st January 2022 and a wider offer of vaccinations for all 5 to 11 year olds will begin from April.
- 2.4 Public Health has been successful in receiving a sum of £485k from Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) for a six-month Community Vaccine Programme scheme.