



North Central London
Clinical Commissioning Group

Directorate Staff Briefing

15 December 2021

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Preparing for the impact of Omicron

- On Sunday, the Prime Minister announced plans to offer COVID-19 booster vaccinations to all eligible adults by the end of December, in response to the threat from the Omicron variant.
- The UK chief medical officers have also increased their assessment of the COVID-19 threat level, and advice from SAGE is that the number of people requiring specialist hospital and community care could be significant over the coming period.
- In light of this, a Level 4 National Incident has been declared, in recognition of the impact on the NHS of both supporting the vital increase in the vaccination programme and preparing for a potentially significant increase in COVID-19 cases.
- The government has written a letter to the NHS to set out the actions every part of the NHS needs to put in place to prepare for and respond to the Omicron threat.

Preparing for the impact of Omicron

The actions in the letter aim to:

- Ensure the successful ramp up of the vital COVID-19 vaccine programme.
- Maximise the availability of COVID-19 treatments for patients at highest risk of severe disease and hospitalisation.
- Maximise capacity across acute and community settings, enabling the maximum number of people to be discharged safely and quickly and supporting people in their own homes.
- Support patient safety in urgent care pathways across all services and manage elective care – this includes ambulance responses, critical care, primary care, cancer and mental health, learning disability and autism.
- Support staff, and maximise their availability – this includes a big focus on how we can make sure we support staff health and wellbeing.
- Ensure surge plans and processes are ready to be implemented if needed

Preparing for the impact of Omicron

- The letter is soon to be published on NHS England's website: www.england.nhs.uk/letters
- More detailed national guidance is expected in the coming days on the areas outlined in the letter
- We are considering our response as a system in all areas – including primary care, vaccinations, urgent and emergency care etc
- Our primary care team is also reviewing the staffing needs for our vaccine delivery sites to meet the latest targets for offering booster jabs to all adults by the end of December. We may well be looking at redeployment options and we will provide further information on this at a later stage.
- We know that it is a huge amount of work to mobilise our response, on the back of a very busy and challenging year, so we want to say a big thank you to everyone who is involved.

Alert levels

National UK Alert levels	
Level 1	Covid-19 is not known to be present in the UK
Level 2	Covid-19 is present in the UK, but the number of cases and transmission is low.
Level 3	The number of new infections would not be increasing significantly. The reproduction rate would be below one, meaning that each infected person is transmitting the infection to less than one other, on average.
Level 4	The virus is not contained, with the R number above one in at least some areas. However, hospitals would be able to cope with the levels of admissions.
Level 5	Infection spreading at a highly dangerous rate, with the R number significantly above one. The NHS would be overwhelmed with patients, with many hospitals over capacity.

NHSE Alert levels	
Level 1	An incident that can be responded to and managed by a local health provider organisation within their respective business as usual capabilities and business continuity plans in liaison with local commissioners.
Level 2	An incident that requires the response of a number of health providers within a defined health economy and will require NHS coordination by the local commissioner(s) in liaison with the NHS England local office.
Level 3	An incident that requires the response of a number of health organisations across geographical areas within a NHS England region. NHS England to coordinate the NHS response in collaboration with local commissioners at the tactical level.
Level 4	An incident that requires NHS England National Command and Control to support the NHS response. NHS England to coordinate the NHS response in collaboration with local commissioners at the tactical level.

We are currently at level 4 on both

Government's 'Plan B' – staff update

- Last week 'Plan B' [was announced by the Prime Minister](#) to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and in particular the new Omicron variant.
- Under the new rules, some key changes were announced:
 - As of 10th December, face masks are now required in additional public settings – including theatres and cinemas
 - From 13th December, you should work from home if you can
 - From 14th 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 7 days to help slow the spread of COVID-19
 - From 15th December, you'll need to show your NHS COVID Pass at nightclubs, some venues and large events to show you're fully vaccinated, have had a negative test result in the last 48 hours, or you have an exemption.
- In North Central London, our office space has been made available to colleagues who wish or need to work from an office and we have actively encouraged staff to attend and collaborate with others where they have wanted to. We have seen an increase month on month in the number of staff regularly attending for part of their week, although the majority continue to work from home.

Government's 'Plan B' – staff update



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- In line with the new rules, we have now asked all staff to work from home if they can
- A small number of staff will need to continue to access the office for either business or personal reasons, and line managers are encouraged to continue to speak with staff about any individual requirements they may have, in order to support them to access offices in the next few weeks.
- There are currently four offices in NCL open for staff to work from. In order for staff to work in the office safely, modifications have been made to our ways of working, including the use of hand sanitiser, desk wipes, the booking of socially distanced desks and the recommendation that lateral flow testing is completed before coming into an office.
- We would ask that, in addition to the safety measures in place at present, those staff working in an office also wear face masks while moving around the office space, and wipe down their desks before and after use. Once you are at your desk, it is optional whether you wear a face mask.
- Any staff member that is working from an office should continue to agree this arrangement with their line manager in advance and [follow the guidance available on the staff intranet](#). The office opening hours over the Christmas period have also been published [on our intranet](#).
- If you have any questions or concerns, or you are being asked to attend external meetings and feel uncomfortable about this, please speak with your line manager or Director.

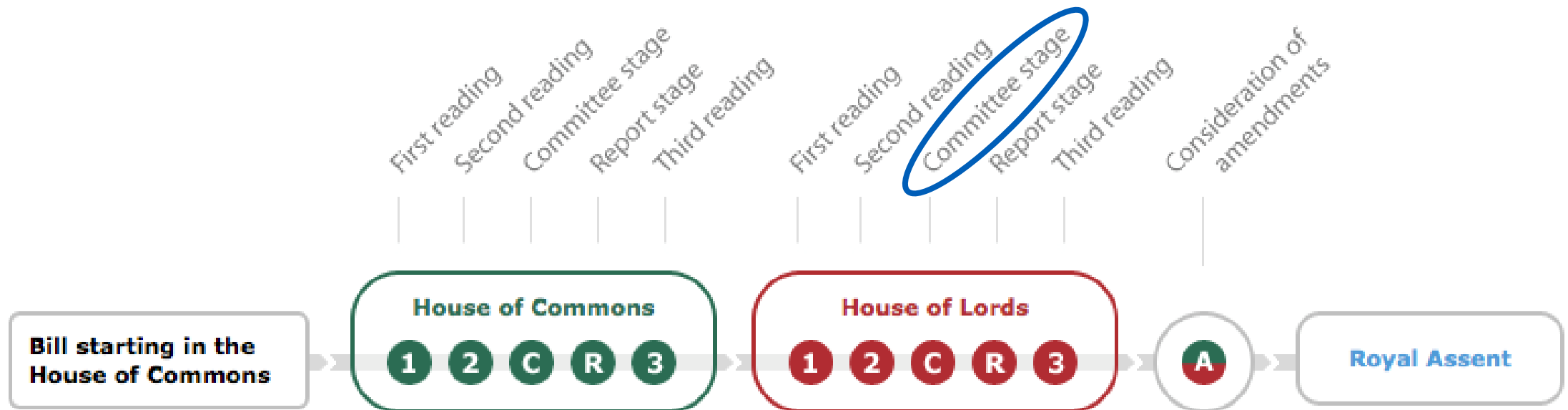


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Integrated Care System Transition updates

Health and Care Bill

- The Health and Care Bill has now progressed to the House of Lords and progressed to committee stage.
- Just to keep colleagues updated on the passage of a Bill through Parliament, we thought it useful to share the stages that a Bill passes through on its way to becoming law.



- We will keep you all updated as the Bill continues to progress through the House of Lords.

HR transition updates

Proposal for a new NCL ICB Executive Team

- Following their appointments to the Designate ICB Chair and Designate ICB Chief Executive roles, Mike and Frances have been working to define the Board level structure for the ICB, in accordance with the NHSE/I requirements and national guidance.
- For NCL, the proposed Executive Team structure incorporates the statutory requirement for a Chief Financial Officer, a Chief Medical Officer, a Chief Nurse and two Non-Executive Directors, and also other Executive-level posts.
- Last week, formal consultation commenced with Executive Directors (the current EMT) and their union representatives.
- The consultation process will be undertaken in accordance with the national NHSE/I HR Framework and the NCL CCG's Change Management Policy, and the consultation period will end in mid-January 2022.

HR transition updates

Proposal for a new NCL ICB Executive Team

- As the consultation documents detail the personal impact on individual staff and the proposed structure is subject to change, the consultation documents themselves will remain confidential.
- Following the outcome of the consultation, staff will be informed of the new ICB Executive Team structure.
- Recruitment to any vacancies within this structure will not commence until the conclusion of the consultation and further information will be shared with staff at this time.
- If you have questions about this process please direct these to the HR transition team in the first instance by emailing nclccg.nclhrtransition@nhs.net. Please note, the HR team will be unable to provide information with regard to the proposed changes and proposed new ICB EMT structure; however, they can provide information on the consultation process.

HR transition updates



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Transfer arrangements for NCL CCG staff members

- The establishment of the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB) will require NCL CCG's functions and duties to transfer to the new ICB once it has been established, along with all CCG assets and liabilities including the CCG's commissioning responsibilities and contracts.
- As part of this, and in accordance with the employment commitment, all NCL CCG staff (other than those at board level) will transfer to the statutory ICB.
- The transfer of staff from the CCG to the ICB will be managed in accordance with the national guidance from NHSE/I, the NCL CCG Change Management Policy, the NHSE/I HR Framework and good practice.
- In accordance with the national and regional timescales set by NHSE/I, we anticipate that the formal 30-day consultation period with staff on the transfer from NCL CCG to the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board will begin in mid-January 2022.

HR transition updates

Transfer arrangements for NCL CCG staff members

- All employees directly employed by NCL CCG on a permanent or fixed-term contract at the point of transfer (1 April 2022) will transfer from NCL CCG to the NCL ICB.
- All employees currently on maternity, paternity, sick leave, secondment, suspension, career break or any other type of leave will also transfer from the CCG to the ICB on 1 April 2022.
- All employee information held by NCL CCG, including all payroll information and staff records will transfer from NCL CCG in accordance with the transfer regulations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the new employer will be the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board.

HR transition updates

Transfer arrangements for NCL CCG staff members

- The CCG's consultation process will be managed in accordance with the NCL CCG Change Management Policy (available on the intranet) and will provide staff with an opportunity to provide their views, comments, feedback and ask questions on the proposed change of employer.
- As staff may be aware, there have been reports of a potential delay to the passing of the Health and Social Care Bill – we will keep the impact of any delay under review and keep staff updated as and when we hear more on this.
- Further information about the national transfer process will be shared with staff once the formal guidance has been received from the national NHSE/I team.
- In the meantime, if you have any questions with regard to the transfer arrangements, please do contact the HR Transition team via email to nclccg.nclhrtransition@nhs.net.

Staff engagement sessions

- In the early part of 2022, an independent consultancy called Traverse will be running a series of engagement workshops with NCL CCG staff about our transition to an Integrated Care System.
- All staff will be invited to attend two workshops between January and April, both on the one topic that feels most relevant to you. The core content will be the same for each set of workshops.
- For the workshops, we would like to bring together groups of staff who work in the following areas:
 - setting of strategy and / or delivery of transformation activity
 - commissioning health care services
 - provision of technical, analytical or performance improvement work
 - provision of clinical services, quality or safeguarding support
 - provision of corporate services
 - provision of support to Primary Care services.
- To sign up to the workshop series most relevant to you, please complete this short form:
<https://magpielanding.traverse.org.uk/surveys/icstransitionworkshops>

Staff engagement sessions

- In advance of these workshops, the team want to gather some information from staff about how they are currently feeling in relation to the transition. For instance, how excited or concerned staff feel and why, and what different groups of staff need to support them through the transition.
- A short questionnaire has been developed and the information generated by the questionnaire will be used by Traverse to help them design the upcoming staff workshops.
- We would encourage all colleagues to complete this in the coming weeks so that the sessions can be most useful.
- Responses to the questionnaire are anonymous.
- You can complete the questionnaire here: <https://feedback.camdenccg.nhs.uk/north-central-london/ca4420b8>

ICB transition and invoices – preparing for 1 April

- As you know, the CCG is in the midst of planning for the creation of an ICB in April 2022.
- As part of the preparation work, the CCG needs to clear as many outstanding invoices as possible.
- At the end of November, the CCG had over **6,500** unapproved invoices waiting for payment.
- Unfortunately this puts the CCG in the bottom five nationally.
- So we *need your help* in clearing these invoices, so that we can:
 - ✓ Retain supplier goodwill by avoiding delays to payment of suppliers during the transition period.
 - ✓ Avoid a large and unnecessary administrative task of re-entering invoices onto the ICB system.
 - ✓ Avoid NHSE/I scrutiny and additional time pressured work to resolve.

ICB transition and invoices – preparing for 1 April

- We've set a challenge to clear all outstanding and overdue invoices by **31 January 2022**.
- To help us achieve this, please could you:
 1. Review invoices in your Oracle workflow with a view to:
 - ✓ *Clearing queries on any outstanding invoices.*
 - ✓ *Applying for credit notes from suppliers where necessary.*
 - ✓ *Ensuring all purchase order queries are resolved, e.g. receipting of invoices.*
 2. Review any invoices that we have sent to other organisations (income to the CCG) and work to resolve any queries to ensure they can be paid promptly.
- The **finance team are here to help** and happy to assist with any queries, so please contact your finance lead.
- Invoice clearance will be monitored through DMTs through January to track progress.

Terminology

- We have received several enquiries in the last two weeks about naming conventions and requiring clarification in some respects.
- NHS England approved our proposed use of several new names which will be used from 1 April and in some cases in advance.
- The new organisation (that NCL CCG staff will transfer to) will be the **NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board**. This organisation allocates NHS budget and commissions services.
- The **North Central London Integrated Care System (NCL ICS)** refers to the group of organisations including the ICB, Trusts, councils and VCSE.
- The **North Central London Health and Care Partnership** refers to a group that will come together regularly and be responsible for the planning to meet wider health, public health and social care needs and will lead the development and implementation of the integrated care strategy.
- If you have any queries about the correct naming convention to use with suppliers or anyone else, please contact the Transition team in the first instance: northcentrallondonics@nhs.net



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NCL Winter Resilience Communications and Engagement Campaign

NCL winter resilience communications and engagement campaign

- Together with partners, this winter we are delivering an integrated system-wide programme of communications and engagement to build confidence in NHS services and support residents, patients, and health and care workers to stay well and access care in the right place at the right time.

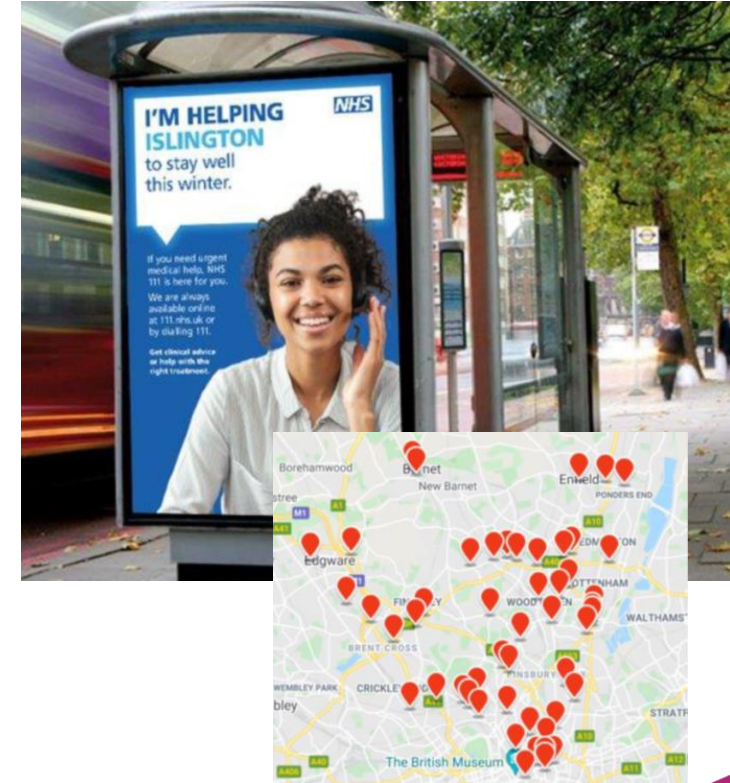
Our campaign objectives include:

- ✓ Raising awareness and driving use of NHS 111 online as the ‘first stop’ for non-emergency health advice
 - ✓ Contributing to the uptake of COVID-19 and flu vaccination, among relevant cohorts
 - ✓ Raising awareness and driving use of services and tools that enable residents to self-manage minor health conditions
 - ✓ Reducing inappropriate emergency department attendances
 - ✓ Reducing the number of residents in NCL not registered with a GP.
- We are working with an external communications agency (Blue Lozenge) between now and March 2022 to increase our reach and impact with local communities and ensure we fully maximise the reactive and proactive opportunities available to us over the winter months.
 - Messaging is aligned with national campaigns such as Boost Your Immunity, Stay Well This Winter and Help Us Help You and our local operational priorities and content is overseen by clinical colleagues.



NCL winter resilience communications and engagement campaign

- Communication channels include print, targeted social media, outdoor advertising, search engine optimisation, targeted SMS activation, and broadcast media. Activity to support each of the campaign themes will take place throughout the campaign but there will be three bursts of activity, where we amplify a specific priority area using paid media:
 - ✓ Phase 1: Focus on NHS 111, 13 Dec to 10 Jan
 - ✓ Phase 2: Focus on vaccination, 4 January to February
 - ✓ Phase 3: Focus on primary care access, February to March.
- Phase 1 activity promoting NHS 111 launches this week and will include high profile large scale outdoor advertising in fifty locations across NCL, search engine advertising promoting NHS 111 when local people search for A&E or similar, and targeted social media advertising featuring messages from local clinicians in a range of languages. This will be backed up with proactive media and community outreach work.
- Campaign activity is being evaluated using the Government Communication Service Evaluation Framework.



NCL winter resilience communications and engagement campaign

Progress in November includes:

Right care, right time

- Short video and editorial features with local pharmacists highlighting community pharmacy offer for residents
- Health advice booklet for parents and carers explaining where and when to seek help in Easy Read and seven community languages.
- Promotion of NHS 111 online campaign across all communication channels
- Promotion of reopening of Edgware walk in centre
- Promotion of borough specific information on evening and weekend GP appointments.

Covid and flu vaccination

- Pregnancy podcast on Spotify and Soundcloud, social media videos and quote cards
- Website refresh to make it more accessible, and reflect needs of patients and partners
- New web and email for social care staff to tackle hesitancy, and inform re mandatory vaccination
- New content for NCL GP website re: vaccination exemption process for social care staff
- Launch of booking gateway and FAQs for parents on 12-15s vaccination
- Christmas-themed vaccination event at Bidborough house 26-28 November.
- Video with a Haringey-based Imam having his flu vaccine for a video advocating this and the Covid booster vaccine amongst the Muslim community.
- Updated flu animations in seven languages.

Primary care access

- Delivered a zero tolerance to staff abuse campaign and continue to share these messages via social media channels
- We are developing content to reassure residents and build understanding of the way primary care is working, supporting access and increasing GP registrations.



Voluntary and community sector outreach work

- To support the campaign, we are also delivering focussed outreach and engagement with our most vulnerable communities and those who we know experience the most barriers to accessing our services. Through this work, we want to: support people to access the right care and help when needed; gather insight to help us better understand any barriers to accessing services; build confidence in the NHS; and help people to understand the importance of immunisation.
- We have identified and commissioned a trusted local organisation in each borough who can act as a lead provider and support us to deliver this work within the necessary timeframes:
 - Haringey – Bridge Renewal Trust
 - Camden – Voluntary Action Camden
 - Islington – Healthwatch Islington
 - Enfield – Enfield Carers Centre
 - Barnet – Barnet Together
- Each lead provider will be working with and sub-contracting other voluntary and community sector groups to help deliver this work. This includes all 5 NCL Healthwatch organisations.
- Work is due to start imminently and will continue through until the end of March.
- If you have any questions about the campaign, please contact the communications team:
Nclccg.communications@nhs.net.



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Other updates

Time for you reminder

- It's been nearly 6 months since we held our 'Time for you' week to try and support and improve people's wellbeing.
- As we move into the Christmas break and start to think about setting meetings for the new year, we thought it would be timely to remind staff about our 'time for you' principles. These include:
 - Not arranging internal meetings between 12:30 and 1:30pm
 - Thinking about making meetings a bit shorter to allow people 5 minutes at the start and/or end of the meeting to have a break/make a cup of tea etc
 - Continuing to think about how we use 'cc' in emails and replying to all
 - Trying to avoid sending emails to colleagues outside of normal office hours
 - Reminding each other about the need to take regular breaks, with full encouragement from EMT to make the principles of 'time for you' work for you.
- Further information [is on the intranet](#).

Some reminders and upcoming events

- **Our virtual Christmas event is this Friday, 2.15-4.30pm** - the event will include the announcement of our Staff Awards winners, loads of Christmas-filled e-fun for everyone to join in with, and some Christmas messages from our Accountable Officer and Chair. Don't forget to bring along a pen, paper, a stop watch...and of course, loads of Christmas spirit! And finally, a big thank you to all the CCG elves who have put a huge amount of work into preparing our Christmas event for everyone to enjoy.
- **Out of office messages** - if you are taking leave over Christmas and new year, please make sure you put an automatic out of office email reply on and update your voicemail to give the dates of your leave and an alternative contact in your absence. Thank you 😊

Thank you and happy Christmas!



- This is the last directorate briefing of 2021
- Our next briefings will take place on Wednesday 12 January, and will continue fortnightly thereafter.
- The meeting invites should already be in your calendars, but if you don't have them in, please contact the comms team for help: Nclccg.communication@nhs.net
- We want to say a **huge thank you** to all our amazing colleagues for your hard work and efforts during another challenging year. We hope you all have the chance for a well-deserved break over the Christmas and new year period.
- And for those of you celebrating, we wish you a very happy Christmas!