



## Joint media release from the Directors of Public Health in Cheshire & Merseyside

### For immediate release

Friday 8 January 2021

### Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Public Health strongly urge public to stay at home to fight COVID

Directors of Public Health across the region are urging people to abide by the latest lockdown rules and **stay at home**. The plea from Directors of Public Health, who are leading the local public health response to COVID, comes as COVID cases have alarmingly increased in communities putting NHS hospitals under extreme pressure.

Under the rules, people are **strongly requested to stay at home** and only leave the house for essential reasons such as getting a COVID test, food shopping, work, education, exercise or helping someone vulnerable. A full list of what is permitted is available at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Ian Ashworth, current Chair of the Cheshire & Merseyside Directors of Public Health Board said, "The next few weeks are going to be extremely difficult and it will be some time until we see the impact of the lockdown take effect. People need to stay at home as much as possible. Only shop when necessary. Exercise away from other people. If you cannot work from home and have a symptom free test centre in your area, get tested regularly so you can self-isolate before symptoms show. We are working hard with health and government partners to speed up and unblock barriers to the rollout of the vaccine for the most vulnerable groups but this will not happen overnight. We now have a number of licensed vaccines which will mean more vaccines becoming available locally. In the meantime, we need people to double their efforts to keep themselves and their loved ones safe."

The COVID-19 vaccination programme has seen over a million vulnerable people and those that care for them vaccinated so far. Vaccines are the way out of this pandemic and an effective vaccine is the best way to protect people from COVID. Members of the public will be invited by the NHS when it's their turn for a vaccination and it is important that everyone who is offered the vaccine takes it to protect themselves and others. Directors urge those waiting for their vaccine to be patient and not contact the NHS or their GP surgery as it will take time for the vaccine to be rolled out to all priority groups.

If residents follow the rules and stay at home, then lockdown restrictions will end sooner and people can look forward to better times ahead. Directors would like to thank everyone who has been doing their bit for so long, and understand they desperately wish to see an end to the restrictions, but it's more important than ever that people now put in that extra effort to keep friends, family and communities safe.

If you develop symptoms of COVID (fever, new continuous cough or loss/change of taste or smell) you can obtain a test by visiting [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or calling 119. If your test is positive you must follow the guidance including self-isolating immediately. More information on self-isolating can be found at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)

For those who need support during this difficult time please visit [www.kindtoyourmind.org](https://www.kindtoyourmind.org) which has details of 24/7 crisis helplines and resources to help mental wellbeing.

### **Ends**

For media enquiries please contact Tracey Lambert, Champs Public Health Collaborative on 07554 114349 [traceylambert@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:traceylambert@wirral.gov.uk)

### **About Champs Public Health Collaborative**

Led by the Cheshire and Merseyside Directors of Public Health, Champs Public Health Collaborative works across the nine Local Authorities in Cheshire & Merseyside. Champs Collaborative enables resources to be shared and public health initiatives to be delivered across a larger area, improving local health outcomes for its population of 2.5 million people. The Collaborative delivers a number of priorities in partnership with Public Health England North West and the NHS in Cheshire & Merseyside and has been supporting the COVID response in Cheshire & Merseyside. The Champs support team lead, facilitate and enable the delivery of the priorities with local public health teams and partners. The Collaborative is responsible for enabling system leadership, collaborative commissioning, sector led improvement, finance, CPD/events and communications, mental wellbeing and public health intelligence. More information at [www.champspublichealth.com](https://www.champspublichealth.com)