

# The Update

21 Jul 2021

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

## **Wearing a mask**

Wearing masks doesn't stop anyone from living their lives. But it can help prevent infection spread and limit pressure on the NHS



## **It's #NotTooMuchToMask**

**As the final coronavirus restrictions across England are lifted and the legal requirements to wear a face mask and social distance come to an end, leading healthcare organisations, charities, unions and medical professionals have joined forces to support the public to make sensible choices that can keep themselves and others safe from infection.**

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Launching a new campaign #NotTooMuchToMask, the group, led by the NHS Confederation, alongside a host of other organisations are encouraging everyone to keep protecting themselves and each other from catching or passing on coronavirus at a time when cases are soaring, and hospitalisations are also rising.

Supporters include the British Medical Association, Academy of Royal Medical Colleges, the Patients Association, NHS

Providers, the Richmond Group of Charities, cancer charities, Unison and other membership bodies. Well-known TV doctor, Dr Sarah Jarvis, has also thrown her weight behind the campaign.

While the vaccination programme has been a phenomenal success and has helped to reduce the link between infection, ill health and death from the disease, the campaign is warning that as COVID-19 has not been eradicated and that with over a third of the adult population

either not vaccinated or having only had one dose, it is too early for the public to let down its guard. Millions of people are still very vulnerable to catching the infection as well as passing it on to others.

As the highly transmissible Delta variant continues to sweep across the country at pace, and with health and social care secretary Sajid Javid warning that we could see 100,000 confirmed cases a day in the weeks to come, the organisations have joined forces to encourage and support the public to continue to make sensible choices to help stop the virus from spreading.

**Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation**, said: "We know the vast majority of the public want to continue to do all they can to protect their fellow citizens from the danger of catching or passing on COVID-19 even after the government has lifted the final restrictions in England.

"As the threat of coronavirus remains, it is not too much to ask of people to continue making sensible and cautious choices on how they go about their lives if it can keep themselves and those around them safe and we are keen to show that we support and stand in solidarity with them."

Through the NHS Confederation's #NotTooMuchToMask campaign, the organisations are calling on the public to sign up to five key pledges to keep themselves and others safe this summer. These are to continue:

1. Wearing a face mask or covering, including where not wearing one could make someone feel unsafe.
2. Doing what they can to keep indoor spaces well-ventilated and opting for meeting outdoors, where possible.
3. Cleaning their hands regularly, including before and after social contact with those outside their household.
4. Getting tested, supporting contact-tracing measures and self-isolating, when required.
5. Making sure they get both doses of the coronavirus vaccine and that they

encourage people they know to do the same.

**Dr Sarah Jarvis**, said: "At the start of the pandemic, we had no idea that COVID-19 could be transmitted so effectively through aerosol spread - just breathing out. At the time, I was sceptical about face coverings on the basis of the evidence. But as the science has progressed, it has become increasingly clear that face coverings can greatly reduce the risk of passing the virus on to others.

"I agree with the NHS Confederation that it is not too much to ask to encourage and support the public to continue to make sensible choices to help stop the virus from spreading."

**Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges**, said: "It really isn't too much to ask. We all have a duty to protect each other from the virus and so wearing a mask, following social distancing guidance and continuing basic hygiene measures are just a minor inconvenience and that's all they are for the vast majority. But we also know those measures can have a major impact when it comes to reducing the spread of the disease and ultimately saving lives."

**UNISON general secretary Christina**

**McAnea**, said: "Rising infections mean more people are falling ill and will need NHS care. Hospital admissions are already back to where they were last autumn.

"NHS staff have been through the mill this past 16 months. The thought of having to go through a third wave will prove too much for many.

"Wearing masks doesn't stop anyone from living their lives. But it can help prevent infection spread and limit pressure on the NHS. So, think of NHS staff next week, and mask up in enclosed or crowded spaces."

**Neil Tester, director of The Richmond Group of national charities**, said: "When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the first restrictions came in, the whole country came together to support each other and our key workers.

"Now as the legal requirements come to an

end, we can again show our strength and solidarity by adopting the five pledges in this vital campaign. In doing so we can help continue to protect each other, our communities and our vital frontline services as much as we can and get through this pandemic together."

**Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, chief executive of the Queen's Nursing Institute,**

said: "Community nurses and their colleagues are caring for some of the most vulnerable people in society in their own homes and communities, including care homes.

"The Queen's Nursing Institute fully supports this campaign and its vital message about the continued need for essential infection control measures. These pledges will help us all to protect public health and prevent more people from becoming seriously ill."

**Lynda Thomas, chief executive at Macmillan Cancer Support,** said:

"We know many people living with cancer are desperately worried about how they will stay safe, with restrictions lifting while cases are increasing. The person next to you on the bus may be someone with a health condition, like cancer, which could put them at more risk of COVID-19. Continuing to wear a mask and observe social distancing in your community can help others feel at ease and could protect them from serious illness."

**Dr Habib Naqvi, director of the NHS Race and Health Observatory,** said:

"As COVID-19 infections continue to rise, masks can help protect you and others. We are still in a pandemic and need to think collectively in terms of safety and responsibility, rather than individual freedoms.

"Not taking that responsibility seriously can have wider implications, giving the virus an opportunity to retighten its grip and place lives at unnecessary risk.

"Not wearing a mask in crowded public places could ultimately lead to avoidable consequences which impact the well-being of loved ones, family, friends and colleagues."

It's #NotTooMuchToMask.

List of organisations who have signed up to the #NotTooMuchToMask campaign:

- NHS Providers, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, British Medical Association, UNISON, Patients Association, NHS Race and Health Observatory, SAPHNA, Queen's Nursing Institute, Skills for Health, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, CRUK, Kidney Care UK, Royal College of GPs, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, MacMillan Cancer Support, British Geriatrics Society, Alzheimer's Society, Richmond Group of Charities, British Heart Foundation.
- The NHS Confederation is the membership body that brings together and speaks on behalf of organisations that plan, commission and provide NHS services in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. We represent hospitals, community and mental health providers, ambulance trusts, primary care networks, clinical commissioning groups and integrated care systems.