

Gareth Johnson MP for Dartford

**Reporting back from Dartford
and Westminster - now
reaching over 5,000 people in
the local area**



1st February 2021

Lockdown

Lockdown now appears to be working with national and local rates of infection falling.

In Darent Valley Hospital, there are currently 225 Covid patients as at 26th January 2021. There are 13 patients on ventilation.

In Dartford Local Authority, 369 people tested positive for Covid in the last 7 days.

At long last there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The vaccine programme has given us all hope and with good reason. We have all been affected by this virus and many things will take a long time to get back to normal but as each person receives their jab, normality is that little bit closer.

Vaccinations

Over 9.75 million vaccines have now been administered so far across the UK and we are leading the global fightback against coronavirus with our vaccine programme.

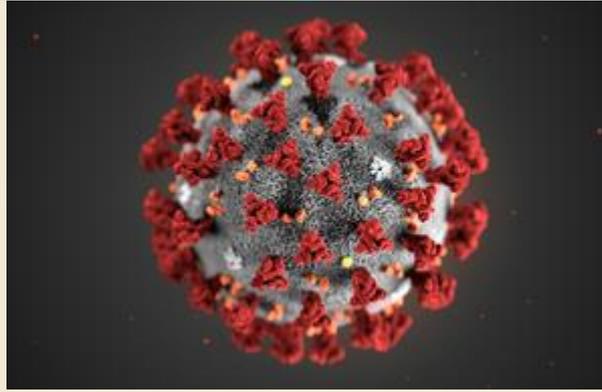
Over 9 in 10 people in their 80s and 3 in 4 of 75-79 year-olds have now been vaccinated. This includes all care home residents.

In the last week, an average of 375,000 vaccinations were given each day and on 30th January, almost 600,000 people were vaccinated in one day.

Every vaccine administered brings us one step closer to normal.

GP vaccination sites in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley

Site name	Providing vaccinations for
Building A, Fleet Health Centre, Gravesend	Chalk Surgery, Old Road West Surgery, Gravesend Medical Centre, Parrock Street Surgery, Pelham Medical Centre, Rochester Road Surgery
Building B, Fleet Health Centre, Gravesend	Oakfield Health Centre, Springhead Health Ltd, The Shrubbery and Riverview Park Surgery
Dartford Football Club	Horsmans Place Surgery, Redwood Practice, Temple Hill Group
Meopham Medical Centre	Meopham Medical Practice, Jubilee Medical Centre
Swanley Town Council, Alexandra Suite	Devon Road Surgery, Farningham (Braeside Surgery), The Cedars Surgery, The Oaks Surgery
Swanscombe Health Centre	Downs Way Medical Practice, Pilgrims Way Surgery, Swanscombe Health Centre
The Orchard Practice, Dartford	Dartford East Health Centre, Lowfield Medical Centre, Maple Practice, The Orchard Practice



New Variant Assessment Platform

The UK's expertise will be offered to other countries around the world to help them identify new variants of Covid-19, enabling them to identify changes in the virus and providing an early warning system for new mutations that could endanger the UK.

The New Variant Assessment Platform will offer UK laboratory capacity to support the work of the WHO and others.

The UK has led the way in gene sequencing and identified more than half of all the coronavirus strains since the pandemic began. By sharing our expertise with others, we can boost capability in this field and better prepare everyone in future.



London Mayor's plans for a Greater London Boundary Charge

London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, has asked TfL officials to investigate the “feasibility” of introducing a £3.50 “Greater London boundary charge” in two years' time, to be

made to people driving into any part of Greater London. This would mean residents in Kent would have to pay £3.50 to drive into the neighbouring London Borough of Bexley. This would have a catastrophic and disproportionate impact on Dartford as it borders London and I highlighted this to the Transport Minister in Transport Questions in the House of Commons.

This charge would have a dramatic and very costly impact on Dartford. The cost is proposed to be £3.50 and could rise to £5.50 for more polluting vehicles. It would mean Dartford residents travelling to neighbouring Crayford, to go shopping or to drop somebody off at Crayford Station, would have to pay an additional fee each day. The charge would apply 7 days a week.

Some roads in Dartford are impossible to exit without going into Bexley e.g. Bowmans Road, Coppice Close and Stonehill Woods Park. There are many people living in Dartford near to the border with Bexley who would be hit with this charge on an almost daily basis.

Joydens Wood would also be seriously impacted with residents unable to drive out of the area along Baldwyn's Park without incurring the charge. It is a mad proposal that hasn't been thought through and we need Sadiq Khan to drop this very divisive idea immediately. He claims it is necessary as Londoners don't get to keep what they pay in road tax for their own roads yet neither do the motorists of Kent, and we don't charge Londoners to use our roads!

This is a charge which could be imposed by the devolved London Mayor without any say from people who will have to pay the charge and that is totally unacceptable for Dartford. Millions of people who live close to any London Borough and cross the border for whatever reason will bear the brunt of this proposal.

To listen to my question and the Minister's response, please click on the photo above.

145 MORE POLICE

MATTHEW SCOTT PCC



Matthew Scott, Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, has launched his Budget plan for Kent Police that will see police numbers rise by 145 to 3970 by March 2022 and in March 2023, numbers will rise again to 4145.

Thanks to a combination of council tax payer support and extra funding from the Government's uplift programme, this will mean that Police Officer numbers in Kent will have risen by 788 since Matthew's election in 2016.

These include more Police Officers being assigned to local schools, an increase in Kent Police's gangs and county lines teams, improved crime investigations and visibility.

Consultation on plans to improve transport links between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet

The C2E (Crossrail to Ebbsfleet) Partnership is consulting on options for improving transport links between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet.

Whilst rail and bus links already exist, journey times both within the area and to Central London and other parts of Kent can be slow and unreliable. The opening of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) will provide fast, frequent services direct to Canary Wharf, Central London and Heathrow, but will terminate at Abbey Wood.

Improvements to the transport network east of Abbey Wood would make the most of the new Elizabeth Line services, would support new homes being built and would improve access to jobs, services, major transport hubs and leisure opportunities across the area and beyond.

Local authorities in the area have long sought to improve public transport to improve the quality of life for existing residents.

The work is at an early stage but is now at a point where C2E would like to hear your views about which of the following potential options would be best to improve transport services in this area:

- potential extensions to the Elizabeth Line between Abbey Wood, Dartford and Northfleet;
- other improvements to the existing rail network; and
- a 'bus rapid-transit' (BRT) linking Abbey Wood with the existing Fastrack BRT service from Dartford to Ebbsfleet and Gravesham.

If you would like to submit your views on these options, please complete the survey before 28th February 2021. There will be a further opportunity to submit views later in 2021, when the number of options under consideration will have reduced and further detail is available on each option.

[C2E Consultation](#)



IB exams this summer

In Education Questions recently, I asked the Education Minister about this summer's International Baccalaureate exams as some schools in Dartford offer the IB as an alternative to A-levels. To hear my question and the Minister's response, please click on the video above.



Court backlog

The pandemic has caused delays in court cases all over the world and I recently asked the Minister for Justice to ensure that domestic violence cases are prioritised. In these cases, pressure often grows on victims as the case progresses and often their resolve diminishes and they feel unable to continue supporting the case. To hear the Minister's answer, click on the video above.



*Gareth Johnson MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 0207 219 7047
email: gareth.johnson.mp@parliament.uk*

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