

A message from Daniel...



I'm Dr Daniel Kimberling, Medical Director (Operational) and one of the directors of Nimbuscare, and I'm delighted to be guest editing this week's newsletter...

I'm incredibly proud of the team of staff and volunteers at the York Vaccination Centre at Askham Bar, who made it possible for us to vaccinate more than 11,000 people in just three days last week! On Friday, Saturday and Saturday, our teams worked from 6am until 11pm each day. It was another reminder to us all of what dedication looks like. Some of the people covering those early starts and late nights volunteer at the site in addition to the work they do in their normal life, and I'm really proud of them.

On Saturday alone we vaccinated 3,700 people, making it our busiest day at the site yet. To put that into perspective, one in every 195 people vaccinated in the entire country on Saturday received their injections here in York!

The month of May has been our busiest to date, with around 75,000 vaccinations administered.

As experts become aware of more Covid-19 variants spreading in the community, some in our region, our immediate priority is to make sure we vaccinate all eligible adults with a first dose and help people to book their second dose appointments. The message is clear; if you're over 30 years of age, you can book your first vaccine now. If it's at least eight weeks since you had your first dose of the vaccine, you can now book your second dose.

If you know of anyone over the age of 50 who hasn't come forward for their jab, it's not too late. We very much welcome them here at the York Vaccination Centre – all people need to do is go online to book or telephone 119. To keep everyone safe and protected as new variants of the virus emerge, it's more important than ever for you to come forward.

For further news
updates, visit:

www.nimbuscare.co.uk

Focus On: Our work with asylum seekers

With the pandemic dominating news headlines, the work that we carry out at the York Vaccination Centre has, inevitably, been the main focus of recent editions of our newsletter. However, it's just one of several different services that Nimbuscare provides. We caught up with Paul Mackay, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner at Priory Medical Group, to hear about the work he's doing to meet the healthcare needs of asylum seekers in York:

Q: How did you get involved in this area of work?

A: The project came about in response to the pandemic; asylum seekers had been housed in HMOs (houses of multiple occupation), but we noticed a policy shift towards housing new arrivals in hotels so that they were able to self-isolate.

We understood that their immediate and ongoing health needs were a priority. I became involved as I have a background, and a specialist interest, in working with vulnerable groups. I worked with Palestinian refugees in the 1990s and have experience of working in UK prisons.

Q: Tell us about the people you're working with?

I work with a group of asylum seekers who are staying in temporary accommodation in York while their asylum claims are assessed. Many different organisations have a role in managing the asylum experience and asylum seekers can be relocated anywhere in the country. Many different agencies, interest groups and contractors provide services as part of the system. The experience for service users can be tough and the system can seem impenetrable.

Different groups are segregated, so some accommodation is for families, women or under 18s, but the group I'm working with in York is made up of men aged 19 to 65 years. They're from a variety of backgrounds; some have crossed the English Channel on precarious dinghies and others have been trafficked by organised gangs. They don't necessarily see themselves as victims of that as they have got to where they want to be. Some may have obtained a visa to study here but not managed to complete their studies, invalidating their visa.

Many are fleeing conflict or persecution and, as a group, they have a lot of unmet health needs. Some carry scars from being tortured or have enduring health conditions because of what they've been through and may never have had access to affordable healthcare back home. Some have no documentation at all, whereas others can show you photographs on their phones of complex medical reports, x-rays, blood test results and consultations.



Administrator Libby Edwards has been creating these simple cards (pictured above) for the asylum seekers that the Nimbuscare team work with so that they have a record of their NHS numbers. The idea is that they can take these cards with them when they leave York and show them to their next GP, which helps to ensure that there is continuity in the care they receive.



[Click here](#)



[Click here](#)



[Click here](#)



[Click here](#)

Q: What service do you provide to them?

A: My role is to carry out an initial health assessment to identify their medical needs, including any allergies, previous medical history, immediate medical problems and to offer them health screening. Perhaps not surprisingly, a high proportion of the patients I see have psychological trauma from torture, persecution and the uncertainty of the ultimate outcome of their claim. We can give them good access to healthcare during their time in York, including access to a GP, referral to a specialist and vaccinations for Covid-19. Each of our partner GP surgeries takes responsibility for running a clinic for them for the month.

Q: What are the challenges?

A: One of the biggest challenges is getting them NHS numbers, which everyone who is resident in the UK is entitled to, including this group of people. NHS numbers are key to providing continuity of care as they move around the country. However, they may have multiple different spellings of their names, or may not know their date of birth or express it in a different way. Also, they can be moved anywhere in the country at a moment's notice, so I've learnt to give them two months' worth of medication. Sometimes, they require a referral to specialist hospital services but may move on before being seen. Our back-up plan is to provide a 'To Whom It May Concern' letter for them to show to their next GP if they're moved before an important appointment can take place. I often wish we could get things done quicker for them; they're a vulnerable group with complex needs and the asylum system does not fully take account of this. Some of these young men have a huge amount of energy, enthusiasm and drive; it's an untapped resource. I hope they feel safe during their time here in York.

Great response to appeal

Thank you to everyone who responded to our appeal in last week's newsletter for more volunteers to come forward for the York Vaccination Centre - we've had a great response!



Memorial Garden planned

During the coming weeks, the team at our York Vaccination Centre plan to transform some of the existing flower beds (including the one pictured bottom left) and create a new seating area, where staff and volunteers can take a welcome break. Our 'Memorial Garden' will also be a fitting tribute to those who have lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We recently donated £100 to St Leonard's Hospice, who gave us a selection of plants (pictured top left), pots, tools and other equipment left over from their recent plant sale fundraiser. Site Manager Will McEvoy first came up with the idea of creating a garden, and Administration Co-ordinator Nicole Zannikos has been busy drawing up plans for the exciting project, as well as securing the plants and other materials needed. It's hoped that some wooden palettes can be used to make seating.

Anyone who would like to volunteer on the Memorial Garden project can email nimbuscare.volunteer@nhs.net. Donations of plants, compost and other materials would also be very welcome.

Improving accessibility

We've been working with the [Wilberforce Trust](#) to provide easier access to the York Vaccination Centre for people with hearing and sight impairments. As well as providing information leaflets and signage in braille, we offer a sign language service and are able to make other adjustments for people, such as giving those who struggle with background noise their vaccination in quieter areas.

Anyone who needs additional support can email the help desk ahead of their visit or let our volunteer stewards know when they arrive for their appointment.



#OurCovidCommunity

We'd like to thank London North Eastern Railway (LNER) for generously donating a catering trolley that we can use to deliver refreshments to our hard-working staff and volunteers at the York Vaccination Centre.

Our picture shows Volunteer Coordinator Laura Brown (left) and volunteer Julia Bundy using it to take tea and coffee to the team.