

OFFICIAL



Please see below a personal message from Dr. John O'Dowd, our HSCP's Clinical Director. In his video, John talks more about HSCP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic with partners, and the ways in which we can play our part in reducing infection spread. He also thanks HSCP staff and partners for also their incredible efforts in supporting the health and social care needs of our city in these complex and challenging times.

COVID-19 Message from Dr. John O'Dowd

Hello, I'm John O'Dowd. I'm one of the Clinical Directors in Glasgow City. I'm a GP in the Gorbals and in my background I'm a Public Health doctor. I work with my other colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to try and make sure that we support our frontline staff to provide good quality services and we try to keep them sustainable, focused on people's needs and tackle inequalities.

I'd like to start by thanking everybody for their response during the pandemic. I can honestly say that across my period working in care services generally, I've been privileged to see the response to COVID-19. Not just that the people moved heaven and earth in the first few weeks of all of this, but actually the fact that even now when we're all quite scunnered, a little bit crabbit, really fed up with this and it's getting dark and dingy, people continue to provide amazing services. So I'm really grateful to people and please keep moving, keep doing what you're doing.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

I want to briefly talk of the future, because COVID-19 changes our priorities in many ways across the city, and some of the things that I think are likely to become bigger problems for us are our health inequalities and poverty, chronic diseases and cancer, of course.

So we'll be bringing forward plans of how we can support our services to address these issues as well as all of the other things in partnership with our colleagues in Primary Care, in Social Care, in Community Pharmacy and others in the third sector.

COVID-19 has changed the way we live our lives and it's not going to go away, but people are responding incredibly well to it. And we know the things that work for it, and even when we wake up in the morning, and we're all wired to the latest news about Omicron and the next variants. Whilst we're still learning about this variant, we already know quite a lot about variants and the things that we know work generally to reduce infection spread. So, physical distancing works, wearing face masks works, hand hygiene works, avoiding busy places works, ventilating rooms you're working in works and, of course, vaccines work.

Now, I know there's a lot of debate and discussion in social media and in the general media about this, and sometimes it can be quite difficult to tell what's real from what is fake news, but I'm also conscious people have their own rights to think about with what they think about the vaccine. My view is the vaccine is safe and effective, and it will continue to be kept up to date to be safe and effective, but it is different from the way vaccines may have worked in the past, where you maybe get a couple of doses and you're done or you maybe get an annual vaccine for flu and you're done. It looks like COVID-19, because of the kind of virus it is, evolves much more rapidly and therefore we are going to need multiple boosters to stay up to date.

I don't think we should be afraid of that, it's a sign that it's working and that we understand the science behind it. I'm aware that staff might be getting fed up with going

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

for vaccines or they might not yet have had time for their booster or they may actually just be really afraid of it and not sure of where the truth lies. So, for people who haven't had their vaccine or are due their booster, I'd ask you to take another look at it please. There's lots of fake news out there. My suggestion is, have a read about it, go to people you trust and have a discussion with people about it and decide for yourself. In my view, vaccination is one of the great strengths of our response. Even if you get the vaccine, it is possible with the new variants you'll get COVID-19, but all of our evidence to date says that you'll be much less likely to fall seriously ill and you'll be much less likely to end up in hospital with COVID-19 if you have the vaccine.

So all that really remains for me to say is thank you for all the work you're doing. We have all been working tremendously hard and in partnership across the response to COVID-19, and anything that we can do to support you, we will be doing. Thank you very much.

OFFICIAL