

COVID-19 Response Stakeholder briefing

14 January 2021

Response to COVID-19 – East Sussex

This briefing aims to update you on the response across our local NHS system in East Sussex to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the vaccination programme.

Latest position in East Sussex

The number of new cases in East Sussex is going back up with 4,327 new COVID-19 cases reported in the latest available 7-day period as published by GOV.UK on Wednesday 13 January 2021.

Managing demand on NHS services

The demand for all NHS and care services across Sussex continues to be significant due to the high infection rates of COVID-19 in the community. In some places, we are now seeing triple the number of COVID-19 positive hospital inpatients compared with the first peak back in the spring, and numbers are still increasing.

Staff across the NHS and local authorities are working tirelessly to ensure they continue to provide safe consistent care; hospitals, community teams, mental health services, social care, GP practices and the NHS111 telephone service are incredibly busy, but remain open.

As you will have seen the Sussex Resilience Forum declared a Major Incident on Wednesday (January 6) to best respond to unprecedented pressures of Covid-19 on the county.

A major incident is a recognition of national demand and puts all agencies in Sussex in the best possible position to come together to tackle the virus. It is a well-recognised and rehearsed escalation that can be expected at times of exceptional need – a major incident was also in place during the summer of 2020.

We agreed the decision would allow the SRF to step up and strengthen its response still further. This may include making more use of volunteer help, preparing in detail for extra capacity needed across services and considering requests for extra support from national government if necessary

In terms of current impact on services, the position is:

Discharge - at times, to ensure we can treat patients who need urgent care quickly and to maintain the highest standards of safety for all our patients, this will mean some patients are discharged from hospitals into community settings which may not be their first choice. Our

teams are working to have conversations with families and manage this with each individual in the best possible way;

Planned operations – at this time the system is continuing to provide cancer, urgent elective operations and diagnostics, but some routine, planned operations are being delayed in order to respond to the increase in demand. These decisions are never taken lightly and are temporary measures only.

Maternity services - due to the significant pressure on our ambulance service, immediate changes are being made to maternity services to ensure that all births can take place as safely as possible. Whilst the ambulance trust is prioritising urgent 999 calls, this means that support for all emergencies from the ambulance service will be stretched and response times may be delayed. This includes attending home addresses for complications that can arise during home births, and attending for complications that can arise at stand-alone midwife led units where women/people may need to be transferred to another maternity unit.

The safety of births is our priority, so across East Sussex the decision has been made to suspend planned homebirths and births at stand-alone midwife led units including Eastbourne Hospital at this time. Our teams are working to ensure that our maternity services are as accommodating as possible and the home birthing teams and midwife-led unit midwives will be available to continue to provide care if you were planning a home birth or a midwife-led unit birth.

The situation continues to be monitored regularly and there are system calls every day. We will continue to keep you updated.

COVID-19 Vaccination programme

When will I get my jab?

Vaccines are being rolled out in GP-led vaccination services, hospital hubs and care homes.

Visit our website for the full list.

NHS

CORONAVIRUS
KEEP SUSSEX SAFE

This week the Sussex vaccination programme has launched a new campaign to provide clear public information to members of the public, patients and our partners.

The campaign will build over the coming days including promotion on social media, newspapers, community groups, and with partners.

We recognise the high interest from across our communities in the vaccination programme and we hope that this campaign can help to support our communities as we continue the roll out of this vital protection.

Update on the vaccination programme in East Sussex

There are a number of ways in which the vaccination is being rolled out to our communities:

- **A GP-led vaccination service** is where those who are in the first priority groups living in our local community will initially receive their vaccination. This involves groups of local GP practices working together to provide the vaccination to their collective patients at one location. This means that you may not receive the vaccination at your local GP; you may be required to travel to a different location nearby.
- **Hospital hubs** – local hospitals across the country have begun giving the vaccine to people over 80 who are attending for a planned appointment and frontline health and care staff. You will only receive your vaccination in this way if you have an appointment at your hospital.
- **Roving service** – the vaccine will be taken into care homes and into people's own homes if they cannot attend a vaccination site. This is being stepped up over the coming weeks as more supplies of the vaccines become available.
- **Large vaccination centres** – each county will have one large vaccination centre which will be able to give the vaccine to large numbers of people. The large vaccination centres that will service your area will be at the Brighton Centre and this is likely to be up and running at the end of the month.

Latest position on GP led vaccination services for East Sussex residents

To date there are nine GP led vaccination services in East Sussex which have started vaccinating their patients who are over the age of 80. A further service goes live at the end of this week, and two more to cover patients across East Sussex.

Eastbourne

Eastbourne has three sites which are live and which have been vaccinating patients over recent weeks.

The Beacon Shopping Centre, for patients at:

- Victoria Medical Centre

Hampden Park Health Centre, for patients at:

- Arlington Road Surgery, Grove Road Surgery, Park Practice, Seaside Medical Centre, and The Lighthouse Medical Practice

Princes Park Health Centre, for patients at:

- Harbour Medical Practice, Sovereign Practice, Stone Cross Surgery in Pevensey, and Downlands Medical Centre and Manor Park Surgery, both in Polegate

Hastings

Hastings has one GP led vaccination service that is providing the vaccination for all eight GP practices in the town and surrounding area.

Kings Church, for patients at:

- Beaconsfield Road Surgery, Carisbrooke Surgery, Churchwood Medical Practice, Harold Road Surgery, Hastings Old Town Surgery, High Glades Medical Centre, Priory Road Surgery, Sedlescombe House, South Saxon House Surgery, The Station Practice, and Warrior Square Surgery

Lewes district

Across the district there are vaccination services available for patients living in and around Lewes, Seaford and The Havens. The services are:

For Lewes: River Lodge Surgery, for patients at:

- Foundry Healthcare Lewes

For Seaford: Hampden Park Health Centre in Eastbourne, for patients at:

- Old school surgery and Seaford Medical Practice

For the Havens: Brighton Racecourse, for patients at:

- Chapel Street Surgery and Quayside Medical Practice in Newhaven, and Havens Health in Peacehaven

We recognise that there have been enquiries this week about people in Seaford needing to travel to Eastbourne for their vaccinations.

The locations for GP led vaccination services have to go through robust checks and assurance, and meet set national criteria. Hampden Park is an established vaccination service with workforce to support these vaccinations.

We recognise that some people will have to travel further than others to get their vaccination depending on where they live in the local area. If anyone is concerned about how they will travel to get a vaccine during lockdown, it should be noted that, under the national guidance, it is permissible to receive a lift from someone or there are community transport providers offering this support in terms of transport for medical appointments. You can find information about community and non-emergency transport on the East Sussex County Council website, or call the community hub on 01273 099956.

Rother district

For patients in the district there a vaccination service went live last week at:

For Bexhill: Sidley Medical Practice, for patients at:

- Collington Surgery, Little Common Surgery, Pebham Surgery and Sidley Medical Practice

For patients in rural areas in the district, a vaccination service in Etchingam is currently being finalised to offer the vaccine for the following GP practices:

- Fairfield Surgery, Ferry Road Health Centre, Martins Oak Surgery, Northiam Surgery, Oldwood Surgery, Rye Medical Centre, and Sedlescombe and Westfield Surgeries

The GP led vaccination service at Etchingam Village Hall will be a partnership between Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust and the GP practices listed above.

Preparations at Etchingam Village Hall are being finalised this week with the aim that the first vaccines will begin to be administered at the start of next week, subject to a confirmed vaccine delivery date.

The GP practice teams have been identifying their patients who are eligible at this stage, starting with the over 80s, and appointments will be booked in over the coming days.

We recognise that at the current time, with one site at Etchingham, some people will have to travel further than others to get their vaccination depending on where they live in the local area.

We would like reassure everyone that there are discussions about further locations in the area and how the vaccination can be transported and offered from GP practices. This is a fast moving programme and over the coming weeks, there may be the option to provide the vaccine from more sites across our communities very soon.

You can find information about community and non-emergency transport on the East Sussex County Council website, or call the community hub on 01273 099956.

Wealden district

Across the district there are vaccination services available for patients living in and around Crowborough and Uckfield. The services are:

For Crowborough: Saxonbury House Medical Centre – going live this weekend, for patients at:

- Ashdown Forest Health Centre, Beacon Surgery, Wadhurst Medical Group, Groombridge and Hartfield Medical Group, Rotherfield Surgery, Saxonbury House Surgery, and Woodhill Surgery

For Uckfield: The Meads Medical Centre, for patients at:

- Bird-in-Eye Surgery, Buxted Medical Centre, Herstmonceux Integrative Health Centre, Heathfield Surgery (over 80s at this time), Mid Downs Medical Practice, and The Meads Surgery

We are pleased to confirm that from Monday 18 January, patients over the age of 80 at Heathfield Surgery will start to receive appointments for their COVID-19 vaccination. We all recognise how important it is to roll out this vital protection across our communities. Vaccinations will be taking place at the GP led vaccination service at The Meads Surgery and also now at some of our other GP practices. We expect appointments to be booked in the coming days and vaccination clinics to be held next week.

For Hailsham:

- Bridgeside Surgery, Hailsham Medical Group, Quintins Medical centre

GPs from the town's three surgeries are working in partnership with Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust to roll out the vaccination in Hailsham. Services will be provided from the surgery sites in Hailsham as soon as vaccine supplies are received. Preparations are progressing with the aim that the first vaccines will begin in the next two weeks subject to vaccine delivery.

How the GP led vaccination services are working

Each site that has gone live had an initial delivery of vaccine with 975 doses to provide the first vaccination to their patients. Some have ordered further supplies and have completed a second session of first doses to their patients. This will now be an ongoing process with the sites ordering vaccine and inviting in more of their over 80 registered population.

The Government guidance on the timing of the second dose has been updated and is now over a 12 week period. All of our vaccination services will be working to adhere to the guidance and invite their patients back for their second dose in the 12 week period.

We are working to vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible, but deploying a vaccine at this scale is unprecedented. Timing will be dependent to a large extent on manufacturing timescales and supply.

We would please ask all partners to encourage the public not to call their GP practice to find out more about the vaccination programme and to make an appointment. GP practices are incredibly busy at the moment providing their day to day care for patients and they have seen an increase in calls to their teams to ask about the vaccination programme and when it will be available. We are working with all GP practices to have clear information on their websites and working with community partners to ensure we can share the latest updates in our communities.

Hospital hubs

Hospital hub vaccination services in Sussex were launched at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton on 08 December 2020. Teams at the hospital have been vaccinating those over the age of 80 who were attending the hospital and health and care staff.

In East Sussex, the Conquest Hospital in Hastings went live as a hospital hub two weeks ago, and Eastbourne Hospital went live last week.

There are three other hospital hubs that have gone live in Sussex, including Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath which became one of the first in the country to use the new AstraZeneca vaccine. This vaccine can be transported easier than the Pfizer vaccine and will be rolled out more widely as supplies become available.

Vaccinations in care homes

Older people in care homes have been identified as the top priority group for the vaccine by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations due to their high risk from COVID-19. Care staff are also in the top priority.

As of 12 January, a total of 75 care homes in Sussex. This includes two homes in Brighton and Hove; 31 in East Sussex and 42 in West Sussex. Many more homes across our patch will be vaccinated this week, and we will update you on numbers again in the next briefing.

We are working in partnership with care homes to roll out the vaccination programme across Sussex and intend to vaccinate all care homes by mid-February 2021, subject to vaccine supply, with all care homes with residents over 65 years old scheduled for vaccination by the end of January. We will confirm details to each home individually. This will include the appropriate information sharing and consents required, including any additional considerations such as mental capacity and safeguarding.

More information

We continue to publish all of the latest information on the vaccine of the [Sussex Health and Care Partnership website](#) including a public FAQ, which you may find useful.

An FAQ with suggested replies to common enquiries is also attached to this briefing to help you with the questions you may be receiving.