

# COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

## Care homes briefing: 12 January 2021

### Roll out of the care home COVID-19 vaccination programme across Sussex

Dear care home manager

As we roll out the COVID-19 vaccine across Sussex, we are committed to making sure you are kept up to date. If you missed the first of our weekly updates on the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme last week, you can [read it here](#).

Please do share this update with your teams, especially regarding information about how they access their own vaccination.

#### Care homes vaccination programme update

We are pleased to share with you that 75 care homes in Sussex have now been vaccinated (as of 12 January 2021). 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.

Work to vaccinate in homes is in addition to the thousands of health and care staff being vaccinated within Sussex hospital hubs every day. These **hubs are being opened up to all health and care staff to receive a vaccine, from today**.

This includes:

- All NHS staff from primary (including general practice and general dental practice), community and secondary care.
- Staff of independent and third sector health providers.
- Care and care home staff in public, private and not for profit sectors.

If you are a member of staff working in health or care and have not yet had your COVID-19 vaccine, you can [book in now](#).

## Why is it important to get your COVID-19 vaccination?

If you're a frontline worker working in social care, you are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 at work. Those working in care homes are at much higher risk of repeated exposure to the infection. Catching COVID-19 can be serious and may lead to long term complications. These are more common in older staff or those with underlying clinical risk factors. You can have COVID-19 without any symptoms and pass it on to family, friends and residents, many of whom may be at increased risk from coronavirus. Being healthy doesn't reduce your risk of catching COVID-19 or passing it on.

With high rates of COVID-19 across Sussex, it's more important than ever to help stop the spread of coronavirus, to avoid pressure on health and care services and to keep the health and social care workforce healthy.

If you have any questions about the vaccine, please refer to our [Frequently Asked Questions document for care homes](#).

People currently unwell and experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and who have tested positive should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine until 28 days after a positive test. If you have recently tested positive for coronavirus, even if you have no symptoms, you will be asked to *wait until 28 days after the date you tested positive* before getting the vaccine.

## Care home vaccinations

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.

Vaccines are being delivered through the Sussex GP-led vaccination service, managed by the local Primary Care Networks (PCN). We expect this to cover the majority of the care homes in Sussex, with the remainder being served by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) vaccination teams.

Delivery of vaccinations by the GP-led service is dependent on the readiness and approval of the local vaccination service, in line with planned go live dates. On occasion, your provider of the vaccine may change from a PCN to SCFT, due to vaccine supply and availability.

## Care staff vaccinations

There are currently six hospital hubs in Sussex (including Brighton, Chichester, Eastbourne, Hastings, Haywards Heath, and Worthing). Between the six hubs, we are vaccinating circa 2,000 people per day, which is as much as the current vaccine supply will allow.

As the vaccine may not be suitable for everyone, you will be asked to complete a pre-screening questionnaire before your appointment. There is more information about the vaccine in the guides for [health care workers](#) and [social care workers](#).

Staff working in care homes can choose whether to wait to be vaccinated at their place of work at the same time as residents, or to book an appointment at a hospital hub.

There is a high demand for appointments, and they fill very quickly. If appointment slots are unavailable when you first look, please check back as further slots are being added all the time.

### **Safety of the COVID-19 Vaccine**

This [presentation](#) may help to reassure those working in care services who have concerns about the safety of the vaccine. It has been produced by Professor Manon from Imperial College London with a specific focus on patient safety and is introduced by Andrea Patterson, who sits on Hampshire Care Homes Association Executive and is also a care home owner. The presentation answers key questions such as:

- How efficient is the vaccine
- What is risk of long term adverse effects of taking the vaccine
- How has it been developed so quickly
- What is an RNA vaccine
- What is in the vaccine and can it interact with medications

### **Change to vaccination schedule at hospital hubs**

All hospital hubs have been instructed to focus on providing first dose COVID-19 vaccinations over the coming months as part of the national effort to immunise as many people as possible as quickly as possible. This means that if staff have already had their first vaccination, their second dose will now be rescheduled for 11-12 weeks after the initial jab, rather than the 3-4 weeks originally planned for the Pfizer vaccine, and the 8-12 for AstraZeneca.

Extending the time between doses should not significantly reduce the protection provided as evidence shows it is the initial shot of both vaccines that provides the bulk of their effects, with the second immunisation more important in extending the duration of their coverage. It also allows us to offer first vaccinations to more staff.

This change has been made by the UK Chief Medical Officers and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, who have decided that while vaccines remain in limited supply it is better from a public health perspective to give a single dose to as many people in priority groups as possible than a double dose to half that number. You can read more about this decision [here](#).

### **Answering your questions**

We are responding to an unprecedented number of enquiries from care homes, the public and our stakeholders regarding the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine across Sussex. We will respond to everyone, but if you need more information, please do have a look at our frequently asked questions documents in the first instance, which may cover the queries you have. These may also help you to manage and support queries from families, and proactively talk to them about the vaccine.

- [Care homes FAQs](#)
- [General vaccine FAQs](#)

**If you have a question about the Sussex COVID-19 vaccination programme, which is not answered in our FAQ document, please do let us know using the dedicated mailbox [Sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:Sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net)**

### **Next steps**

While we are making great progress, we need to be realistic that it will take time. 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.

Thank you again for your continuing dedication and support for our population, each other, and the Sussex system. We have so much to be proud of in the way we all, as a health and care system, have responded to the pandemic throughout 2020. We are confident that we will continue to make positive progress this year too.