

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Independent Care Sector briefing: 28 January

Roll out of the Independent Care Sector COVID-19 vaccination programme across Sussex

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

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

Independent Care Sector vaccination programme update

Older people in care homes are one of the top priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccine due to their high risk from coronavirus.

In line with the national target to have vaccinated all care homes by the end of the month, we have been working tirelessly to vaccinate both residents and staff across Sussex. As of 25 January 2021, we had vaccinated more than 8,381 residents across a total of 454 care homes for older people (equating to 90 per cent of all of our care homes for older people in Sussex).

Unfortunately anyone with COVID-19 is unable to receive the vaccine while they are recovering. Some care homes are currently experiencing positive cases of COVID-19 amongst their residents and in these cases the home or those residents who are unwell have not been able to have their vaccination at this point. The vaccination teams have a clear schedule in place and will be revisiting them 28 days following the positive test.

In Sussex, we have one of the highest numbers of nursing and care homes per capita across the country and so this is a significant undertaking but thanks to the dedication and commitment of our vaccination teams from GP-led services and Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust we are making excellent progress towards achieving the government target.

If your care home is promoting their vaccinations on Twitter, don't forget to tag us <https://twitter.com/SussexHCP1> so we can share on the good news.

[Watch our short film >>](#) about the vaccination programme for care homes for older people, and featuring local care home staff.

Supported living and Extra Care settings

Residents living in Extra Care / supported living settings will be invited in to receive their vaccination during attendance at a local GP-led vaccination service, in line with the [national priority groups](#). We are currently working through groups 1-4.

Housebound residents will have a home visit to receive the vaccine to make sure they can receive this vital protection. Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust is working with local GP practices to understand which residents need this level of service and will be making arrangements for appointments.

Vaccinations have started and people will be contacted as soon as an appointment is available. Please do not contact your GP practice, you will be contacted as soon as possible.

Learning disabilities vaccination resources

- Access the COVID-19 vaccination [easy read](#) document
- [Easy read resources on the COVID-19 vaccine](#) are available online, for people with a learning disability, their carers, families and professionals

Health and care staff vaccinations

If a GP-led vaccination team or Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust is visiting a care home, they will vaccinate staff when they visit, *depending on supply*.

All residents in homes must take priority for vaccinations in homes, with the remaining vaccine supplies used for staff in the home on the day.

Because there is a limited number of vaccines, care home staff should look to utilise both vaccine team visits *and* appointments at the hospital hubs and vaccination centres to ensure all staff are covered.

All paid, employed (including agency) health and care staff working in Sussex are being invited to attend a local hospital hub or vaccination centre to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 you will need to wait 28 days from when you had your positive result before receiving a vaccination. If you have had the flu vaccination you must wait 7 days before receiving your COVID-19 vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is working to vaccinate all frontline health and care workers by mid-February. We are well on our way to achieving this, and thousands more health and care workers are being vaccinated every day. The number of vaccinations delivered continues to increase every week as further vaccination services come online.

How many doses of the vaccine will be required and when does it become effective?

The MHRA has authorised the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine on a two-dose schedule, with the second dose to be given after four weeks but within 12 weeks of the first.

Full protection kicks in around a week or two after the second dose, which is why it is so important that when you are invited, you act on that and get yourself booked in as soon as possible.

The 1st dose of the COVID-19 vaccine should give you good protection from coronavirus. But *you need to have the two doses* of the vaccine to give you longer-lasting protection. We urge everyone to attend both of their appointments for their own protection, as well as to ensure we don't waste vaccines.

There is a chance you might still get or spread coronavirus even if you have the vaccine.

This means it is important to:

- continue to follow social distancing guidance
- if you can, wear something that covers your nose and mouth in places where it's hard to stay away from other people

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.

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 Sxccq.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net