

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Independent Care Sector briefing: 11 February 2021

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.

Sharing your information through the capacity tracker

Thank you for continuing to update your information on the care home Capacity Tracker. This is critical in allowing us to see which care homes have received a visit from the vaccination team to date and enables us plan future visits to ensure we are delivering the vaccine in all care homes, to as many residents and staff as possible.

When completing the tracker, please ensure you complete the questions around 'COVID Vaccination Team visits' as this live data is used to inform the next stages of planning for the vaccine roll out; including first dose schedules and homes that have had visits deferred following a risk assessment during local outbreaks, picking up individual residents who were not able to be vaccinated at the initial time of a vaccine team's visit, and second dose visits.

For general Capacity Tracker support, please contact necsu.capacitytracker@nhs.net or telephone 0191 691 3729

Across Sussex the majority of care homes are updating the numbers of staff and residents receiving vaccinations. Thank you for your ongoing engagement at this very busy time.

Residents' vaccinations update

As at 10 February 2021, 618 (81.6 per cent) of care homes (all types) have been visited to vaccinate residents and staff. This includes 93 per cent of care homes for residents over the age of 65.

Care homes for older people

A small remainder of homes in Sussex have had visits deferred following a risk assessment, during local outbreaks. Our team are now focused on re-scheduling vaccination team visits for homes with outbreaks. They are also working to ensure that anyone who was not able to be vaccinated at the initial time of a vaccine teams' visit, can be given their first dose.

Alongside this, we are planning in second dose visits.

All other care homes

We intend to visit all other care homes by 15 February 2021, subject to any outbreak risk assessments.

Other care settings

Residents living in Extra Care/supported living/sheltered accommodation 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 extending invitations for people in priority groups 1-4, before 15 February 2021.

Housebound residents within these groups will have a home visit to receive the vaccine to make sure they can receive this vital protection. GP practices and Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust are working together to understand which residents need this level of service and are making arrangements for appointments. Vaccinations have started and people will be contacted as soon as an appointment is available.

Health and care staff vaccinations update

Thank you to all your staff for your dedication and commitment to looking after our most vulnerable people through some very difficult months. **Let us protect you by booking an appointment to have your vaccine now.**

We continue to encourage health and care staff to book their first vaccine dose appointment as soon as possible. All paid, employed (including agency) health and care staff working in Sussex are invited to attend a local hospital hub or vaccination centre to have the COVID-19 vaccine. [You can book your appointment here.](#)

At times, slots will be limited at some locations. **If you cannot find a slot at your preferred location, please consider one of the other local centres.** More slots are added every day.

Following your feedback, we have now removed the request for an NHS number from the hospital hub booking forms. We heard from staff that many people did not have access to this information, and we want to make it as easy as possible for staff to make an appointment.

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. 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.

Second doses

Where people already have second doses arranged, these will go ahead and are planned for.

For those who health and care staff who do not have second doses booked yet (including those who were vaccinated in care settings), plans are being developed and people will be communicated with via their employers.

In the meantime, the booking links currently being circulated should be **used to book first vaccinations only**. Where a second vaccination is booked in this way your appointment may be cancelled or you will be refused vaccination when you attend your appointment.

If you have been given an appointment for your second vaccination and you want to change the time of your second vaccination, you can cancel it using the information in the text message that you received. An email will be sent to you with a link for you to make another appointment at 12 weeks.

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.

If staff have declined to receive the vaccination at the care home setting, they can still [access the vaccination via another site or centre](#) convenient to them.

What about the allergic reactions that have been reported?

These vaccines are safe and effective for the vast majority of people – they have been tested on tens of thousands of people and assessed by experts.

Any person with a history of immediate-onset anaphylaxis to the ingredients contained in the vaccines should not receive them. A second dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine should currently not be given to those who have experienced anaphylaxis to the first dose of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccination.

Everybody will also be screened for potential allergic reactions before getting vaccinated. All vaccinators will have the training they need to deal with any rare cases of adverse reactions, and all venues will be equipped to care for people who need it – just like with any other vaccine.

Has the guidance on allergies changed?

The original MHRA advice was that anybody with a known allergy to specific ingredients in the vaccine should not be vaccinated. This was temporarily widened but the guidance has now reverted to this.

Checking for allergies is a routine part of the process before giving any vaccine or new medicine. Having these conversations – as well as being able to deal with allergic reactions in the rare case they do happen, is a central part of training for vaccinators. But these are new vaccines and so the NHS and the MHRA are being extra vigilant and responding quickly to ensure everyone across the NHS is totally clear on these requirements.

[Read the latest COVID-19 vaccine advice if you have a history of allergies by MHRA on GOV.UK](#)

Will the vaccine affect my fertility?

The Royal College of Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives issued a statement on 19 January 2021, saying:

“There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 vaccines will affect fertility. Claims of any effect of Covid-19 vaccination on fertility are speculative and not supported by any data.”

[More information about the vaccine and fertility](#) can be found at the Royal College of Gynaecologists website.

Dr Elizabeth Gill, GP and Chief Medical Officer for Sussex NHS Commissioners, said:

"Coronavirus is the greatest health challenge in living memory, taking loved ones from us and disrupting every part of our lives. Vaccines mark a decisive turning point in the battle with the pandemic. NHS vaccination programmes have successfully helped overcome tuberculosis, polio, and smallpox, and have now turned their focus to COVID-19.

"The vaccines being offered by the NHS have met the strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The MHRA follows international standards of safety.

"Getting your COVID-19 vaccination is one of the best defences against the virus. It should help reduce the rates of serious illness, reduce pressure on the NHS and social care services, and above all, save lives."

Public-friendly, accessible information on Coronavirus

Accessible, high-quality information on COVID-19 is available in one place to make it easy for staff and carers across all health and care settings to find trusted information they can use with patients, families, carers and service users, quickly and easily.

- Selected by Health Education England's national NHS Knowledge and Library Services team, library.nhs.uk/coronavirus-resources provides a gateway to the best available resources, gathered from a range of relevant health and third sector providers. Updated regularly, the tailored content includes materials aimed at specific groups such as older people and carers and for people with cancer or long-term conditions as well as providing resources in different accessible formats. Most recently sections have been added on long-COVID and vaccination.
- A series of COVID-19 resources in a variety of languages and accessible formats are updated regularly on the [Sussex Health and Care website](#)

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.

- [Sussex care setting vaccine FAQs](#)
- [General vaccine FAQs](#)
- DHSC [latest Covid-19 vaccines Q&A](#)

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