

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Independent Care Sector briefing: 4 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.

Residents' vaccinations update

As at 1 February 2021, 75 per cent of care homes (all types) in Sussex have been visited to vaccinate residents and staff.

This includes 92 per cent of care homes for residents over the age of 65.

Care homes for older people

Sussex has met the government target to vaccinate residents in care homes for older people by the end of January 2021. 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 team's visit, can be given their first dose.

Alongside this, we are planning in second dose visits.

All other care homes

We intend to vaccinate residents at all other care homes by mid-February 2021, subject to any outbreak risk assessments and vaccine supply.

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 groups 1-4.

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 will be 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.

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. [You can book your appointment here.](#)

The Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund states that all providers should ensure that staff who need to attend work or another location for the purposes of being vaccinated or tested for COVID are paid their usual wages to do so, and any costs associated with reaching a vaccination or testing facility.

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.

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.

[Hear from Siriporn](#) from Thornbury Care Home in Uckfield about why she had her vaccination.

While we believe that most NHS and local authority employed staff are well aware of their options to book a vaccination, there may still be a significant number of health and care staff working in independent and voluntary sector organisations who are not.

Please can you support the vaccination effort by continuing to promote the availability of vaccination appointments to your eligible staff; and considering if there are any independent or voluntary sector providers of health and care services that you work with that may have eligible staff, and sharing the information with them if so.

Where 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.

Reassurance messages for our diverse communities

We know that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are among the group that are at higher risk of becoming critically ill and dying as a result of contracting COVID-19.

Vaccination is therefore a vital step in protecting already vulnerable communities from further harm.

For social care staff there are information leaflets about the vaccine available in a variety of languages – please do make these available to your teams proactively to help encourage uptake of the vaccine

- [COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for social care staff](#)

For Muslim communities:

- The [British Islamic Medical Association have produced a position statement on both the Pfizer and the Astra-Zeneca vaccines](#) which includes a statement on animal products and recommends the vaccine for Muslim communities.
- The [British Islamic Medical Association have also produced a 'Myth buster'](#) with infographics.
- The [Muslim Council of Great Britain \(MCB\) website holds Coronavirus information](#) including; Advice for Mosques and Madrasas, statements of support for the COVID-19 vaccinations, and a 'myth buster' with infographics.

For other ethnic minorities

- The Department of Primary Care and Public Health, Brighton and Sussex Medical School has produced COVID-19 factsheets which have been co-produced by ethnic minority community groups in Kent, Surrey and Sussex.
 - [Nepali leaflet](#)
 - [Hindi leaflet](#)

For Catholic communities:

- [The Catholic Church offers reassurance messages](#) that Catholics may “in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves”.

You may wish to share [this short film](#) from a host of well-known BAME people with your staff



Misinformation around Covid-19 vaccine and fertility

There has been some misinformation circulating about the impact of COVID-19 vaccines on fertility. In response to this misinformation, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) have made a [public statement](#) of reassurance, stating 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.”

Protection from the vaccine

It is important for people who have received the first dose of the vaccine to know that it may take a week or two for your body to build up some protection. The national guidance is that people should have two doses within 12 weeks for the vaccine to be fully effective.

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
- Wear full PPE and continue to follow all Infection Prevent and Control guidance in care settings, or for the public - wear something that covers your nose and mouth in places where it's hard to stay away from other people

Can I catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment.

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

Although a mild fever can occur within a day or two of vaccination, if you have any other COVID symptoms or your fever lasts longer, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

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