

Coronavirus Vaccination in Devon

Briefing #8 – 26 February 2021

Key messages

- Anyone who has received a letter from the National Booking System inviting them to book an appointment should use the [website](#) or 119 to book an appointment. The NHS is urging people who have received a letter **not to contact their GP practice** about a vaccination.
- **391,325 people in Devon** received a first vaccine dose between 8 December and 14 February. It is estimated that at least 90% of over-65s in Devon have been vaccinated.
- The Queen [has urged](#) the public to ‘think about other people’ and get a Covid jab when they are offered one. The monarch, 94, and the Duke of Edinburgh, 99, received their first doses of the vaccine in January.
- The Department of Health and Social Care [has responded](#) to the interim statement from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. The government objective for the next phase of vaccine rollout is to further reduce mortality, morbidity and hospitalisations. The [interim advice from the JCVI](#) is that the best way to achieve this objective is to **continue prioritising people for vaccinations by age**, as this will enable the most rapid deployment across the population. Read coverage [here](#).

Vaccination programme – latest advice

- Anyone who has received a letter from the National Booking System inviting them to book an appointment should use the [website](#) or 119 to book an appointment.
- The NHS is urging people who have received a letter not to contact their GP practice about a vaccination.
- Practices are reporting a significant number of calls which are preventing people who need medical help getting through to the practice. The calls are also slowing down the vaccination programme, as practice staff have less time to book appointments for people in the group they are focussed on.
- There are several locations for vaccination available via the National Booking Service in Devon – appointments are regularly added so if there are not any available, keep checking the website for availability in coming days.
- Practices are currently vaccinating people aged 65 and over, or those aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions.
- Practices are not yet focussing on inviting people under 65 without underlying health issues for vaccination and are therefore asking people not to contact them about an appointment.
- When practices move vaccinate people under 65, they will contact them.

Vaccination programme – current priorities

- The NHS in Devon is currently focussed on vaccinating people [aged 65 and over and those who are clinically vulnerable](#) (JCVI priority groups 5 and 6), together with an [expanded group](#) of clinically extremely vulnerable people.

- **People aged 65 and over** (group 5) are invited to book a vaccination using the national booking service at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or call 119 (free, 7am-11pm, seven days a week) to choose from large scale vaccination centres or selected local pharmacy services. For people who are unable to travel to a large site, or who would prefer to be vaccinated by their local GP, they don't need to do anything - their practice will contact them directly to arrange an appointment.
- GPs have been asked to offer jabs to those over the age of 65 and **people with underlying health conditions** that make them clinically vulnerable (group 6) – such as diabetes and respiratory, heart, kidney and liver disease.
- This is a **large group** of people and practices are urging their patients in this group **not to contact them about an appointment**. GP practices hold data about each of their patients who fall into these groups and will contact them directly to arrange an appointment.
- People with certain underlying health conditions are more vulnerable to illnesses and face an increased risk of severe illness or death from Coronavirus. For notes on how the JCVI defines clinically vulnerable people, see the list in [this article](#).

Vaccination for people with learning disabilities – update

- The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) [has advised](#) the government and the NHS to invite all people on the GP Learning Disability Register for vaccination.
- The JCVI's advice remains that adults with severe and profound learning disabilities, and those with learning disabilities in long-stay nursing and residential care settings, should be offered the vaccine in priority group 6 (people with Down's syndrome are included in group 4). Adults with less severe learning disabilities are not currently prioritised.
- However, GP systems may not always capture the severity of someone's disability, meaning some adults who are more severely affected by learning disabilities may not be invited for vaccination alongside people with other long-term health conditions. Therefore, with immediate effect, local vaccination services are asked to offer the vaccine to all adults on their GP Learning Disability registers.
- On Tuesday (23 February), the Health and Social Care Secretary confirmed the new arrangements [in a letter](#).
- In Devon, practices are calling people with learning disabilities to book appointments and will discuss arrangements for dedicated vaccination sessions to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.
- There is no need to contact your GP practice to book an appointment – they will contact you.

Vaccination data for Devon

- **391,325 people in Devon** received a first vaccine dose between 8 December and 21 February, [vaccination data published by NHS England and NHS Improvement](#) shows, broken down as follows:

[cont]



Age group	Number of first doses given	Approx % of age group received first dose*
80+	78,744	Estimated to be at least 95% for people aged 70 and above [#]
75-79	57,979	
70-74	75,449	
65-69	45,982	61%
all 65+	258,154	90%
16-65	133,171	19%

* Based on number of first doses given as a proportion of the 2019 ONS population estimates. Data sourced from NHS England and Improvement.

[#] Due to population growth since 2019, in some cases the tables show the number of vaccines given as higher than the 2019 population figures used.

- This week's data includes information on the number of vaccinations given by district council area and parliamentary constituency.

Community newspaper contains essential vaccination information

- A community newspaper containing essential information on Covid vaccination, testing, safety and local services is being read by hundreds of thousands of people across the county from this week.
- *Devon Together* (see right) was jointly commissioned by NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, Devon County Council and Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.
- It aims to ensure that readers in rural areas and locations where internet connection is poor know about key services, including vaccination, testing and safety. It has a print run of 300,000 copies.
- The 16-page colour newspaper has been professionally produced and is being included as a pull-out supplement in more than 100,000 newspapers published by Archant across Devon this week. It will also be delivered free directly to homes, as well as being offered in selected supermarkets and other publicly-accessible settings.
- Content includes a map of vaccination and testing centres, a guide to vaccination services, the views of local people who have been vaccinated or used testing services, answers to questions about vaccination, advice on staying within lockdown rules and avoiding scams, details on how to join the health and care workforce in Devon, volunteering, useful contact information for local services, and much more.
- Get your copy this week or [read the online version here](#).



Vaccinations in care homes

- Visits for second doses begin in March with GPs, NHS staff, local authorities and care homes working closely together to confirm arrangements
- There has been a reduction in severe outbreaks of Covid in care homes since the peak at the beginning of January.

Vaccinations for unpaid carers – update

- We are aware there remains a need for clarity in relation to this important group, further to a number of issues arising this week.
- A confirmed set of rules, known as a standard operating procedure, is expected from government next week and we will update local people when this is received. In the meantime, the following applies.
- Two data sources are being used to identify those who are eligible within this definition: those flagged as carers in GP systems, and those assessed by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) as eligible for Carer's Allowance.
- Unpaid carers over 18 who receive Carers Allowance should receive a letter and can use the National Booking System (www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or call 119, free, 7am-11pm, seven days a week) to make a booking. The system will check that their NHS number is has a carers flag set against it.
- NHS England say that from next week, unpaid carers over 18 who get the carer component of universal credit will also be able to use National Booking System (as above).
- This initial phase of adult carers do not need to provide any evidence of eligibility as they are already identified as eligible and will be able to book with their personal details or NHS number.
- People who have a note on their patient record at their GP practice to say they are a carer are being called by GP-led vaccination centres (and cannot book via the national booking system).
- In many cases they will accompany the person they care for if they are also being vaccinated in group 6, for example people with learning disabilities.
- Carers under 18 will not be able to book using the National Booking Service. Those under 18 should receive a letter advising them of this. They will be invited by their GP-led service where they can receive the Pfizer vaccine.

Other important information

- The vast majority of people **working in school and early years settings** are not classed as a frontline health or social care worker in the guidance published by Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI).
 - To qualify under this criteria people need to be providing face-to-face care or support to children or adults who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 and therefore likely to become seriously ill or need to go to hospital if they get COVID-19.
 - In most cases people who are eligible (those who provide face-to-face care or support children or adults who are extremely vulnerable) should be contacted directly by their employer and be given a letter to say they are eligible.
 - If you are 70 or over, on the Shielded Patients List, or a frontline health and social care worker, it's not too late to come forward.
 - Frontline healthcare workers and community-based social care workers in priority group 2 [can book](#) their vaccination appointments in a vaccination centre or community pharmacy through the national booking service until 28 February.
 - Don't just turn up to a vaccination centre – make an appointment if you are eligible.
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How local people can play their part

1. **Stay at home:** The best thing the public can do to help the NHS is to stay at home as much as possible:
 - Every time you leave your home you risk coming into contact with an infected person or touching a surface or door handle or petrol pump which may be contaminated. Any one of these interactions could be a crucial link in the chain of transmission which could lead to someone becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.
 - People in Devon have really helped by following the government guidance seriously. If everyone does as they are asked, our hospitals and other services will cope.
2. **When you get your call from the NHS for your vaccine, please take it up:**
 - The NHS will get in touch with you when it's your turn to be vaccinated.
 - Please attend your appointment.
 - You will not be offered a choice of which vaccination you receive – both approved vaccines are rigorously tested, safe and effective.
 - Please help us by not calling your local hospital or GP practice about getting the vaccine – the NHS will contact you when it's your turn.
 - Blocking phonelines with queries stops other people getting healthcare and diverts staff time, meaning the vaccine rollout will be slower.
3. **You may still transmit Covid after you have been vaccinated.**
 - Having the vaccine should protect you from becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, but you may still be a risk to others if you are exposed.
 - It is crucial that you continue to observe the 'stay at home' and 'hands, face, space' advice until advised that it is no longer necessary.
4. **Follow the government guidance: 'Hands, Face, Space'.**
5. **Use the NHS in the best way**
 - Think 111 first; or choose the right service for your needs: self-care, pharmacists, local minor injury services or your GP.

Further information and vaccination data

[Vaccination data published by NHS England and NHS Improvement](#) includes information by NHS system.

For more information on vaccination and the health and care response to COVID-19, click on www.togetherfordevon.uk/priorities/coronavirus-covid-19 or the [NHS website](#).

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