

## **Additional resources for GPs on the Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service and Vaccination Centres**

To note, this should be used alongside the resources in the latest Covid-19 Vaccination Programme comms resource pack, which is available from your CCG or regional NHSEI communications teams.

### **In brief**

As planned, the next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme begins on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January with the first seven sites operating the Vaccination Centre model. The first six community pharmacy sites also go live this week to test the model before further rollout.

Both of these types of service will be bookable through a national service, which has begun sending letters to people this weekend. They will add extra capacity to the vaccination programme – alongside hospital hubs and GP-led local services - so that the NHS can protect all those who would benefit most as quickly as possible.

As the booking service will initially be handling appointments for the first groups of vaccination centres and community pharmacies, it is important that we help manage expectations and the number of people using this service inappropriately so that people who are eligible can book when they receive their letter from the NHS.

### **Vaccination Centres**

On Monday 11 January, the first seven vaccination centres will become operational as the next step in rolling out the COVID-19 vaccinations. Initially, there will be one centre in each region, with more centres opening over the course of the month.

These centres are the important third strand of the NHS Covid-19 vaccination plan, sitting alongside hospital hubs and Local Vaccination Services, both of which will continue to grow in number as the supplies of vaccine available to the NHS continues to grow.

The first centres are:

- Ashton Gate in Bristol (South West)
- Epsom racecourse in Surrey (South East)
- Excel Centre in London (London)
- The Centre for Life (North East and Yorkshire)

- Etihad Tennis Club in Manchester (North West)
- Robertson House in Stevenage (East of England)
- Millennium Point in Birmingham (Midlands)

These sites were chosen from those ready to vaccinate large numbers of people quickly to give a geographical spread covering as many people as possible.

Initially, people aged 80 and over who live within 30 to 45 minutes of a Vaccination Centre, **and who haven't already been vaccinated by their local GP led vaccination services or hospital hub**, will be the first people to receive letters to book their appointments. Vaccination Centres will also work directly with local health and care employers to directly book staff into appointments.

To ensure that those who are greatest risk get their vaccination first, we are asking the public to help us and wait for the NHS to contact them when it is their turn, and to not come to vaccination centres (or any other service) without an appointment.

The Vaccination Centres complement, rather than replace, existing vaccination services, which will continue to receive deliveries and should therefore continue to invite patients who are yet to be vaccinated. It is expected that the network of centres will be able to vaccinate tens of thousands of people per week once operating at full capacity, helping us to achieve our shared goal of offering vaccines to everyone in the top priority groups by the middle of February, which in turn then means all services can then move on to vaccinating the next priority groups in line with the level of supply.

Over the course of the first few days, centres will gradually build up and test their systems to being able to operate up to 12 hours a day. The testing period is essential to ensure that centres have the right social distancing and COVID secure measures in place to protect our patients and staff.

Each vaccination centre will be staffed by clinicians, non-registered vaccinators, administrative staff and a range of volunteers who will help make a visit run as smoothly and safely as possible. The exact number of staff and volunteers will depend on how many 'pods' the centre has.

There will be three volunteer roles staffed by St John at vaccination centres: fully trained vaccinators, post vaccination observers and patient advocates. As well as these volunteers, the NHS Volunteer Responders programme, coordinated by the Royal Voluntary Service, will also be providing volunteers to be stewards, who will play a crucial role in helping people through the centre, improving the patient journey.

To ensure that critical patient care is not compromised, there is also a national contract in place with NHS Professionals who have been recruiting and training tens of thousands of vaccinators – including many former and private clinicians - who are available to local systems to complement local recruitment and bolster the local vaccination workforce.

## **The NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service**

The national NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service went live in advance of booking letters starting to arrive from Saturday 9 January. The NHS service will send out letters for eligible people to book their vaccine appointment.

They can do this in two ways:

- Booking online at [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)
- Phoning 119.

### **How it will work**

The NHS will write to eligible people (based on the JCVI cohorts) offering them to book through this service.

People will be able to book their appointment in a vaccination centre or community pharmacy when these come online.

Letters will initially go to people aged 80 and over who live in reasonable travelling distance of the active locations (currently up to 45 minutes), and who haven't already been vaccinated through other NHS vaccination services.

As more locations go live, the number of letters going out to people will significantly increase, expanding to other priority groups.

**The letter that people will receive also explains that people may have also been contacted by their GP services and if they have booked with them, they should take no further action.** Information on which patients have not been vaccinated or booked in is drawn from GP records, so it is important that you keep these as up to date as possible.

### **Ensuring patients can access the service when they need to**

In line with the process already in place for other vaccination services, the NHS will contact people when it is their turn to book their vaccine.

It will not be possible to use the NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service if you haven't received an invitation letter. It will also not be possible to get a vaccine at a Vaccination Centre or Community Pharmacy without an appointment.

### **Standard patient-facing lines/script to support GP Practices:**

Thank you for getting in touch.

If you have received a letter in the post from the national booking centre you can book your appointment using the details in the letter.

You will need your NHS number, which is at the top of the letter, your name and date of birth.

The appointment will be made at [name of Vaccination Centre(s) serving area]. There is free parking on site.

**If the person doesn't want to book an appointment at the Vaccination Centre:**

It is important that you take the first opportunity to get your Covid vaccination to ensure that you are protected.

However, if there is a reason that you are not able to book your appointment at the nearest Vaccination Centre you can choose to wait until [we/ your local surgery] contact you and invite you in.

However, it might be a while before we are able to invite you.

GPs/We are working through our patient list in line with the national prioritisation guidance and they/we will contact you to invite you in.

A vaccination programme of this size and scale will still take some time to roll out in full but we want to assure you that there is enough vaccination for everyone and no one will be forgotten, and like the rest of the NHS we are working to offer vaccines to everyone in the top priority groups by the middle of February.

**Copy for GP websites:**

Now that more doses of Covid-19 vaccines are available, the NHS is able to open more vaccination services, including the first Vaccination Centres.

People who are eligible and who live near these new vaccination services will receive letters from the NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service, telling them how they can book their appointment.

The NHS is rolling out additional services quickly, but it remains important that the public don't try to book or go to these services before they receive their booking letter.

And when you do book an appointment, please make sure you attend.

You may receive a letter from the national NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service inviting you to book an appointment at a regional Vaccination Centre, the closest of which is at [name of Vaccination Centre(s) serving area].

If you receive the letter from the national service and can travel to the Vaccination Centre safely, we recommend that you book using the details the letter provides.

If you are unable or don't want to go to a Vaccination Centre, you can choose to wait and get your vaccination at [insert name] which is the local vaccination hub for patients in this area.

We have started vaccinating patients over the age of 80 years of age and are inviting people in according to the criteria and prioritisation set by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#), and will contact you when it's your turn.

Like the rest of the NHS we are working to offer vaccines to everyone in the top priority groups by the middle of February.

**Please do not contact us if you haven't received an invite yet.** We are very busy at the moment and doing so could prevent a patient who needs our help from getting through. We will contact you when it is the right time for you to book your appointment.

Below are some frequently asked questions which may help you further.

## **Q&A**

### **Q: Which members of the public are being offered the Covid-19 vaccine at the moment?**

The NHS is currently in the process of offering the vaccine to people aged 80 and over, those who live or work in care home, and frontline health and social care staff. When everyone in these groups has had the chance to get their first dose of the vaccine the programme will expand to other people that are at risk either due to their age group or medical condition in line with the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations.

### **Q: What are the different ways members of the public might be contacted to get their vaccination?**

1. **Local hospital services** – you might be contacted either to have the vaccine as an inpatient or at an outpatient appointment.
2. **Local GP services** – practices in your area are working together to contact and offer the vaccine to as many people as possible. This may be at a different surgery than you usually go to, or at a venue we have set up specially to deliver vaccines.
3. **Through your care home** – GPs and their teams are also arranging to vaccinate care home residents directly, in their homes.
4. **A letter from the NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Booking Service** to book online or by phone. Booking through this service will give you the option of having the vaccine at a special Vaccination Centre, or potentially a community pharmacy depending on whether these are available locally.

### **Q: I've already had my first jab, how do I get my second?**

If you have had your first jab already through a hospital or GP services, the local NHS will contact you about getting your second.

If you have received a letter from the national booking service and you have already had your first dose of the vaccination, please ignore the letter. This service will require you to book appointments for both doses of the vaccination at the same time.

### **Q: I've contacted the national booking service but I can't travel to one of the locations that are available, what should I do?**

More locations will become available in the coming weeks so you could try again later.

Alternatively, you can choose to wait until your local GP service invites you for the vaccine.

If you are housebound and unable to leave the house to travel to any appointment, and cannot arrange for someone to help you, your local NHS services will be in contact with you.

**Q: I have received a letter but I have already booked or attended an appointment at a local GP service. What should I do?**

If you already have a vaccination booked through your GP please ignore the letter – there is nothing you need to do.

**Q: I have the letter but don't understand how I book my appointment?**

If you have received a letter from the national booking centre inviting you to book your Covid-19 vaccination you can do this online or on the phone using the details on the first page of the letter.

You will need your name, date of birth and NHS number to book.

At the time of booking you will be asked to book your first vaccination and your follow up vaccination for 11 to 12 weeks' time.

**Q: I have received a letter about booking my appointment. Can I contact my GP to do this?**

No, please do not contact your GP surgery. We cannot help you to book into the Vaccination Centre.

Please use the details in the letter to book your appointment directly.

**Q: I have received invites to get vaccinated from both a local GP service and the national system, but haven't booked with either yet. Can I choose where to go?**

Yes.

**Q: Will people who have had their vaccination through a hospital, GP or care home still receive a letter to book through nhs.uk or by ringing 119?**

This may happen in a small number of cases.

If people have had their first vaccination through a hospital or GP service, or if they are in a care home, this information will flow through to the national NHS system.

If this is recorded on the national system before the national booking letter is printed then it will flag not to send that person the national booking letter. There are likely to be cases where the letter is printed to be sent and then person subsequently has their vaccination recorded and therefore is sent the national booking letter. The booking letter explains this and says that if people have already had their first dose do not book through nhs.uk or 119.

**Q: My neighbours / friends have received a letter from the national vaccination centre to book their jab. Why haven't I received mine?**

The NHS is inviting people for vaccinations based on expert advice on who would benefit most. This has been set by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#). At the moment we are focusing on people aged 80 and over, people who live or work in care homes, and health and social care staff. If you are in one of these groups you will be invited to book your vaccine soon.

A vaccination programme of this size and scale will still take some time to roll out in full. Please be assured that everyone who needs the vaccine will be offered it.

The NHS will be in touch with you when it is your turn to be vaccinated. Please don't call us before you are invited.

**Q: What will the opening hours of vaccination centres be?**

Standard opening times for vaccination centres will be 8am – 8pm, seven days a week.

**Q: What are the operating hours of the telephone booking system?**

The telephone booking service will be open 16 hours a day (from 7am until 11pm), seven days a week. People will also be able to book online 24/7.

**Q: What if I can't get to the Vaccination Centre?**

People who are housebound will be contacted by their GP services about alternative ways to get vaccinated. People can also wait until more locations closer to where they live become available. The NHS will follow up with people that haven't booked their appointment, as a reminder.

**Q: What staff and volunteers will be working in Vaccination Centres?**

The centres will be staffed by vaccinators and clinical supervisors, as well as administrative staff and stewards to ensure the effective and safe operation of the service.

These will largely be new and existing paid NHS staff, but volunteers – including from St John Ambulance or the NHS Volunteer Responder programme - will also play an important role.

**Q: Are Vaccination Centres safe?**

Yes. Staff at these sites will wear appropriate PPE and there will be social distancing and cleaning measures in place to keep everyone safe.

**Q: I've received a letter but someone I live who is the same age hasn't yet. Can we get vaccinated together?**

The NHS is inviting eligible people in a phased basis as supplies of the vaccine allow. It is important that you wait for your letter from the NHS, and you will not be able to book without one.

If you have received a letter and live with someone who is also eligible but has not received a letter, it is likely that theirs will follow shortly. If you like you can wait and book at the same time.

**Q: What should people do if they can't get through to the phone line straight away?**

At times, due to high demand, the phone line will get very busy, which may mean waiting on the line for a while or calling back later. You can alternatively book online.

If you need help to do this, please ask someone in your support bubble.

**Q: Does this service work for people who don't understand English well or are deaf?**

The phone line will have interpreters and a BSL facility available on request to help you book your appointments.