

Coronavirus Vaccination in Devon

Briefing #1 – 8 January 2021

Key messages

- Thousands of people in Devon are being vaccinated against COVID-19 every day as the biggest vaccination programme in the NHS's history gathers pace.
- Vaccination is the way out lockdown and the pandemic. An effective vaccine is the best way to protect people from coronavirus.
- The NHS has a clear vaccine delivery plan and will contact local people when it's their turn to get the vaccine.
- Lockdown #3 happened because the NHS is so busy looking after people with and without COVID-19. The new variant of the virus transmits much more easily than the previous one and the number of people in Devon's hospitals with COVID-19 has increased dramatically in recent weeks.
- This will be a marathon, not a sprint, and we cannot let down our guard. People must stay at home where they can and follow all the rules to stop the spread of coronavirus.
- Anyone who has had the vaccine must continue to follow government guidance on social distancing and wearing a mask, as immunity takes weeks to develop.
- Both the Pfizer and Oxford vaccines have been through rigorous tests and approval processes to prove they are safe and effective. Therefore, patients will not have a choice about the vaccine they receive when they are called for an appointment.

How local people can play their part

There are four main things that people in Devon can do to help the NHS give the vaccine to as many local people as possible, as quickly as possible:

1. **Choose the right service for your needs** as GPs are now managing extra pressures from the vaccine programme. Consider self-care for minor illnesses and injuries; pharmacists for illnesses like diarrhoea, earache, painful cough, sticky eye, teething and rashes; and local minor injury services. You will still get a face-to-face appointment at your local practice if your GP thinks you need one.
2. **Attend all appointments**, whether it is for a vaccine, to see your GP or at hospital, unless they are personally contacted by your provider and told otherwise.
3. **Don't make things harder for the NHS by 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
4. **Follow Government rules** – the vaccines are a wonderful development, but we are not out of the woods yet. Remember, 'Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives' and 'Hands Face Space'. Act as if you have COVID, even after you've been vaccinated

Three main ways the vaccine is being delivered in Devon

1. All four of the county's main **hospitals** – in Plymouth, Exeter, Torquay and Barnstaple – are giving the vaccination to priority groups in line with national guidance
2. **GP practices** are working together in groups to set up local vaccination centres. Across the county, 16 centres are now in operation, serving 104 of Devon's 123 practices, with more starting in coming days to cover the remaining parts of the county
3. GP-led facilities are delivering the vaccine to residents and staff in **care homes**

Large-scale vaccination centres serving wide areas are also planned nationwide and more details will follow on arrangements in Devon when they are confirmed.

Vaccinations in care homes

- Care home residents and staff were set as the highest priority group by the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.
- Unlike the Pfizer vaccine, the Oxford vaccine does not need to be stored at ultra-low temperatures and is much easier to move, making it easier to use in care homes. Local vaccination services are being issued with small packs of Pfizer jabs which can be used in care homes.
- GP-led and hospital vaccination services have made good progress in vaccinating staff and residents in care homes in Devon and the focus will now be on offering the vaccine to everyone in care homes as soon as possible.

Hospital hubs

- Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, Torbay Hospital in Torquay, the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple are all giving vaccinations to priority groups.

GP-led local vaccination centres

- GP practices are working together to set up local vaccination centres across Devon, with **16** now established, serving **104 practices**, with **more to follow soon**.
- As well as using NHS locations like GP surgeries and health centres, some local vaccination centres in Devon are being opened in more unusual, specially adapted, venues like Exmouth Tennis and Fitness Centre, Plymouth Pavilions, the Riviera International Centre in Torquay and Barnstaple Leisure Centre.
- To minimise wastage, local vaccination sites are using unfilled appointments to vaccinate frontline healthcare workers, including pharmacy, dental and optometry teams.
- NHS England has written to all practices this week asking them to prioritise the vaccination programme and they have set out some measures to support them to do that.

A full list of the sites and the practices they serve, correct as of 6 January, is available on the [Together for Devon website](#).

Vaccine delivery

- COVID-19 vaccinations are currently being delivered across Devon in phases according to **priority groups** identified nationally by the independent Joint

Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The priorities are not set by the local NHS.

- The UK's four Chief Medical Officers agreed with JCVI advice that the priority should be to **deliver first vaccine doses** to as many people on the JCVI phase 1 priority list in the shortest possible timeframe. This updated guidance on the timing of second doses will potentially save thousands of lives.
- From this week, appointments for **second doses** in Devon are being postponed and will be rearranged in accordance with the guidance.
- The NHS in Devon is finalising plans to ensure **health and social care staff have access to vaccinations as soon as possible**, with vulnerable staff within these groups prioritised.
- **Vaccine supplies** in Devon are good. The rollout of the **Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine in Devon, from 8 January**, which is easier to transport and store, will allow the NHS to increase the pace of vaccination to meet the Government's target.
- **Current and former NHS staff are becoming vaccinators**, with tens of thousands having already completed their online training nationwide. They will be deployed as more vaccine supplies become available.

Further information and vaccination data

National data on vaccination is available [here](#) and will soon be available daily.

Regional vaccination information will be released by NHS England and NHS Improvement in due course – details will follow. At this stage, figures for specific systems are not being published.

For more information on vaccination and the health and care response to COVID-19, click on www.togetherfordevon.uk/priorities/coronavirus-covid-19

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