

Covid-19 Vaccination Information Update

This week marked a significant step in the response to the pandemic as the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme began in Sussex. Working in partnership across Sussex, the NHS began vaccinating people against coronavirus at The Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton on Tuesday.

Delivering the Pfizer vaccine is complex as it needs to be stored at very cold temperatures and moved carefully, so large hospitals ('hospital hubs') have been the first sites across the country to receive the vaccine. From next week, the NHS will also begin offering the vaccine from a number of locations in the community, which will initially be led by GP practices working together for their local area.

The vaccination programme will continue to expand in Sussex over the coming weeks and months as more vaccine becomes available. This will include more hospital hubs, more GP-led local vaccination services, larger vaccination centres, and a roving service to take the vaccine into care homes and people's own homes if they cannot attend a vaccination site.

The Government's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has said that vaccines should first be given to care home residents and staff, people aged over 80, and health and care workers, before being rolled out to the rest of the population in order of age and risk. In line with this, some patients aged 80 and above who are already attending a hospital hub are being invited to have the vaccine while they are there.

The largest care homes closest to each hospital hub are also being invited to book staff in to vaccination clinics at the hospital. Any appointments not used for these groups are being used for hospital staff who are at highest risk of serious illness from COVID19.

GP-led local vaccination services will be inviting eligible patients to receive the vaccine and further detail is being worked through to consider the roll out to wider health and care staff. The Government, the NHS and its partners are working hard to overcome the significant challenges to vaccinate care home residents as soon as possible.

The Government recently wrote to all care homes for older people with advice on the preparations that can be made now to ensure that residents and staff can receive the vaccine as soon as it is available. Health and care staff from across Sussex are supporting this historic vaccination effort.

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust are leading the work to recruit and train more staff - both clinical and non-clinical - so that the NHS in Sussex can deliver this unprecedented immunisation programme without impacting on other vital services. Visit www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/work-with-us/covid19vaccine.htm to find out more.

Covid-19 Vaccination Information Update

Key messages for the public:

- The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.
- Please act on your invite when it comes, and make sure you attend your appointments.
- All the while COVID-19 is in our communities it is important to follow the guidelines and remember Hands, Face, Space. It will save lives and help the NHS. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Sussex visit:

www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keepsussexsafe/sussex-covid-19-vaccinationprogramme