

Coronavirus Vaccination in Devon

Briefing #5 – 5 February 2021

Key messages

- Vaccination centres across Devon are focussed on vaccinating people in priority [cohorts 1-4](#), as determined nationally by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and in line with the Government ambition of vaccinating these groups by mid-February.
- On Wednesday 3 February, just 57 days after the programme began in the South West, the **1 millionth person in the region** received a first dose. Nationally, more than 10 million people have received a first dose.
- **204,815** people received their first jab in the NHS Devon CCG area up to 31 January and around 92% of people aged 80 and above have been vaccinated in Devon.
- To **reduce wastage**, you must let your vaccine centre know if you cannot attend your booked appointment for a vaccination.
- **Nearly all older people's care homes** across Devon have had vaccination visits, with work ongoing to vaccinate the small number remaining.

Progress on vaccinating priority groups

- Vaccination centres across Devon are **focussed on vaccinating people in priority [cohorts 1-4](#)**, as determined nationally by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and in line with the Government ambition of vaccinating these groups by mid-February.
- National guidance is awaited on progressing with following cohorts once these groups are reaching completion.
- People aged 70 and above, and people who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, can now use the national booking system – via the [website](#) or by calling 119 – to book an appointment at a large-scale vaccination centre or participating pharmacy centre **whether or not they have received a letter**.
- NHS partners in Devon are working to make sure **supplies** are used for these priority groups, while ensuring wastage is kept to an absolute minimum.
- **Letters** from the national booking system to people in priority group four (people aged 70-74 and people who are clinically extremely vulnerable), inviting them to book their COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre or community pharmacy, are expected to be received over the next few days.
- The letters make it clear that people have a choice of where to get vaccinated and can choose to wait for their GP services to contact them directly, if they haven't already, or book into a vaccination centre or community pharmacy.
- To read more about the different locations giving vaccinations in Devon, read the [guide in the briefing of 29 January](#).
- Opening hours at all vaccination centres are flexed up and down in line with the supply of the vaccine. Supplies nationwide remain limited and are being distributed fairly across the UK to ensure that the most vulnerable are immunised first. As soon as supplies are received in Devon, they go in people's arms. All vaccination sites are continuing to receive deliveries as planned.

Vaccination data for Devon

- Between 8 December and 31 January, [vaccination data published by NHS England and NHS Improvement](#) shows **204,815 people in Devon** received a first vaccine dose, broken down as follows:


Age group	Number of first doses given	Percent of age group received first dose
80+	72,831	91.6%
75-79	39,993	72.7%
70-74	12,708	16%
Under 70 (includes health and care staff)	79,283	(data not available)

- In the South West, 92.8% of over-80s have been vaccinated, the highest of any NHS region.
- Devon is on course to have offered everyone in the JCVI groups 1-4 a vaccination by mid-February, in line with the Government's aim.
- Devon has the fifth highest proportion of over-70s of all NHS systems, with 17.8% of the county's population aged 70 or above.
- This means, proportionally, there are many more older people to vaccinate in Devon. The NHS in Devon has made excellent progress vaccinating people in the older age groups (one to three), giving more than 112,000 first doses to people aged 75 and over, and will continue vaccinating people in group four – people aged 70-74 and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

Vaccinations in care homes

- Nearly all older people's care homes across Devon have had vaccination visits.
- Doctors and local authorities are continuing to work with the very small number of remaining homes with outbreaks to ensure that the maximum number of residents and staff can be vaccinated as the earliest opportunity.
- Small numbers of residents and staff in other care homes, who could not be vaccinated on the initial visits for range of reasons, are also being followed-up.
- GPs and their teams are now vaccinating residents and staff in registered care homes for people with learning and physical disabilities and mental health difficulties.
- Nationally, the [NHS confirmed](#) on Monday that the NHS has now offered the COVID-19 vaccine to residents at every eligible care home with older residents across England.

Second doses

- Arrangements for second doses will vary, depending on where the first dose was given.
 - When using the [national booking system](#), you book your second appointment for 12 weeks later when you book your first dose.
 - If you were vaccinated by a GP practice service, they will contact you about your second appointment if they haven't already, but this will also be in line with the 12-week timetable.
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- Arrangements for second doses at hospital hubs vary between sites – these include writing to people to book appointments, and booking them at the time of the first dose.

Unpaid carers

- The vaccination of **unpaid carers** will take place in line with the JCVI guidance. JCVI priority group 6 includes unpaid carers - although many will receive vaccination before group 6 because they will have fallen into groups 1-5. We are currently vaccinating cohorts 1 to 4.
- Work is in progress to develop a national Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the vaccination of unpaid carers and this will be shared in due course. Until then, unpaid carers need to wait until they are contacted by the NHS.

Other important information

- Thanks to the generosity of local people in donating their time, the NHS currently has enough **volunteers** for the large-scale vaccination centres at Exeter and Plymouth – thank you to everyone who has stepped forward. NHS partners are working together to put in place processes to support GP-led sites which need more volunteers – details to follow in due course.
- **Health and social care staff** are among those [being encouraged](#) to get their vaccination. The country's leading health and social care professionals have joined forces to urge their frontline colleagues to get the vital first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine over the coming weeks and have [published a letter](#) for use by local employers.
- Marking the **anniversary of the first confirmed COVID patients** being treated by the NHS, Sir Simon Stevens, NHS chief executive, [said](#): "It is the vaccination programme, the biggest in NHS history, combined with the prospect of new therapies and treatments that offer us hope for the future."
- Beware vaccination **scams** - Coronavirus vaccines are only available on the NHS. The vaccine is free and at no point will you be asked to provide financial details. Information on how you will be contacted regarding the vaccination can be found [here](#).
- NHS England and NHS Improvement has [produced videos](#) of clinicians recording messages in some of the most **commonly spoken languages** to help ensure messages about the importance of getting a COVID-19 vaccine are clear for all.
- **Supplies** do remain limited nationwide, meaning we need to ensure all the doses we do have go to those people who need them most. We will continue to prioritise giving people who need it that crucial first dose - which the evidence shows gives you the vast majority of your protection from the virus - as quickly as possible.
- Even when you have **had the vaccination, you still need to follow the public health measures** and take steps to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

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](#).

The vaccines are safe and effective – useful general information

- The [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine](#) is safe and effective. It is the best way to protect your residents, your family and yourself from coronavirus.
- Both the [Pfizer](#) and [Oxford](#) vaccines have been through rigorous tests and approval processes to prove they are safe and effective.
- They do not contain any animal products or egg.
- You won't be able to choose which vaccine to have. Both are safe and effective, so it's important to have the one you are offered.

How the vaccine is given

- The COVID-19 vaccine is given as an injection into the upper arm in two doses.
 - The first dose provides good protection from coronavirus, with the second giving longer lasting protection. The second dose is being given at about 12 weeks after the first.
 - It takes a week or two for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine so it's important to continue to follow social distancing guidance even after you've been vaccinated.
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Side effects

- Like all vaccines, both the Pfizer and the Oxford coronavirus vaccinations can cause [side effects](#), although not everybody gets them.
- Thousands of people have been given a COVID-19 vaccine so far, and reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.
- Most side effects are mild and should not last longer than a week. They include a sore arm where the needle went in; feeling tired; a headache; feeling achy; feeling or being sick. You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, if you need to.

Allergic reactions

- Tell healthcare staff before you are vaccinated if you've ever had a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).
- You should not have the vaccine if you've ever had a serious allergic reaction to:
 - a previous vaccine
 - a previous dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine
 - some medicines, household products or cosmetics
- Serious allergic reactions are rare. If you do have a reaction to the vaccine, it usually happens in minutes. Staff giving the vaccine are trained to deal with allergic reactions and treat them immediately

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility

- There's no evidence the COVID-19 vaccines are unsafe if you're pregnant.
- Care home staff who are pregnant are recommended to speak to a healthcare professional before having the vaccination.
- You do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.
- The vaccine cannot give you or your baby COVID-19, so you can have the COVID-19 vaccine if you're breastfeeding.
- [Read the latest COVID-19 vaccine advice if you're pregnant, may get pregnant or are breastfeeding on GOV.UK](#)
- The Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) issued a [joint statement](#) to confirm there is “no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 vaccines will affect fertility”.
- The professional bodies have also produced an [information sheet to help eligible pregnant women make an informed choice](#), as well as a [question and answer document](#) on COVID-19 vaccination, pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Several **videos** on the subject from leading national clinicians are also available:
 - [COVID-19 vaccines: can they affect my fertility?](#) - Dr. Gayatri Amirthalingam, consultant in the National Immunisation team at Public Health England
 - [COVID-19 vaccine: guide for women of childbearing age or are planning a pregnancy](#) - Dr. Gayatri Amirthalingam, consultant in the National Immunisation team at Public Health England
 - [COVID-19 vaccination: guide for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and pregnant healthcare staff](#) - Dr Shriti Pattani, GP and the occupational health lead for London North West University Healthcare
 - [COVID-19 vaccine: can the mRNA inside the vaccine change people's DNA or affect their fertility?](#) - Dr. Kevin Brown, consultant medical virologist at Public Health England

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