

## **Core narrative – Covid-19 mass vaccinations**

### **For North West Surrey system partners:**

- The GP federation and North West Surrey Alliance partners have been working around the clock to set up multiple community vaccination clinics within just a few days.
- Our local vaccination sites are currently operational at Chertsey Hall and the McLaren Offices in central Woking. Further sites are planned in Walton and the Hythe Centre in Staines early in the New Year.
- Like other vaccination sites across the country, we only have a very limited amount of vaccine – most of our community sites, including these two, have only received 975 doses so far, with a further delivery of the same amount in the new year (which will primarily be for people's second dose).
- Administering the vaccine to individuals is based on a strict priority order, set nationally by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation ([JCVI](#)). Those eligible to receive the vaccine are contacted and invited to attend an appointment slot.
- In order to quickly reach as many patients as possible we have been using a range of communications methods including phone calls and text messages. However, in trying to ensure the limited supply of vaccine is used and all appointment slots filled, more text messages have been sent than there are appointments available, particularly for the Woking site. We also understand that not everyone has been able to access the link given within our text message.
- We apologise that this may cause disappointment and frustration and we acknowledge that our messaging wasn't as clear as it could have been; this is a new process and inevitably we won't always get this right first time. Once more vaccine supply is available, those still waiting will be contacted as soon as possible.
- We would be really grateful for your help in reassuring local residents that we will get to everyone who is eligible for a vaccine but that this will take time. This vaccination programme is on a scale larger than the NHS has ever previously seen and it will take time to reach everyone.
- We will also be stepping up vaccinations to care home residents and staff from next week; this will start with just a few care homes and will expand over the coming weeks, subject to vaccine supply. Again we would ask local care homes to be patient, we will contact each home individually when we are ready to come out to them.

## **General messaging for use by all Surrey Heartlands practices**

The Covid-19 vaccination programme has got off to a strong start in Surrey Heartlands with community based clinics set up across the county.

The vaccines are being rolled out in waves with different clinics working flexibly based on supply of the Pfizer vaccine, which is limited in all waves.

The first wave of vaccination clinics have now completed having spent last week (w/e 20 Dec) rolling out vaccinations to people who are eligible based on the national prioritisation criteria – those aged over 80 year and care home staff. These services will reopen when they receive the second dose of vaccine for the first patient cohort (in the first week of January).

More clinics will be opening up in the coming weeks as more vaccine supplies become available.

In addition to the community vaccination clinics we also have:

- A **hospital hub** at Royal Surrey Hospital - offering vaccines to inpatients and outpatients over the age of 80 yrs, health and care staff.
- A **roving service** will launch w/c 28 December in which GPs will be taking vaccines out to nursing homes, this service will build up as we receive more supplies of the vaccine.
- A **Vaccination Centre** - we are developing a large vaccination centre that will open in the New Year and have the capacity to vaccinate large numbers of people 7 days/week.

## **Please be patient**

Our teams are working flat out to co-ordinate the biggest vaccination programme in history.

Having to set up multiple clinics within 10 days has been a mammoth effort. As with any project of this size and complexity there is no perfect approach and we are problem solving when challenges arise.

We know that waiting for contact from the NHS for your vaccination may be an anxious time. If you are in the first priority group (over 80 or a care home worker), please bear in mind that we are working with limited vaccine supplies. So if you

haven't been contacted yet, don't worry. The NHS will contact you when it's your turn.

Until then, please allow the NHS and partners to focus on delivering care and co-ordinating this mammoth effort. **Please don't contact your GP practice, the wider NHS or any of the community venues that are hosting clinics to seek a vaccine.**

When you are contacted, please attend your booked appointment and remember, you need both doses of the vaccine for it to be effective (at least 21 days apart). In the meantime it's more important than ever to follow the latest government guidance to control the virus and save lives.

## FAQs

- **I am in one of the listed priority groups, why do I have to wait?**

Covid-19 vaccines will become available as they are approved for use and as each batch is manufactured. So every dose is needed to protect those at highest risk. You will be called in as soon as there is enough vaccine available.

Some people who are housebound or live in a care home and who can't get to a local vaccination centre may have to wait for supply of the right type of vaccine. This is because only some vaccines can be transported between people's homes.

- **I've called my GP practice about the vaccination but they say they don't know anything, why?**

Single GP practices don't have the capacity to roll out a programme like this alone. That is why they have come together to pool resources and work with other partners in the community to get the clinics up and running quickly. As a result, individual practices are still managing all their usual day-to-day business and may not have answers to your questions about vaccinations. That is why we are asking people to wait to be contacted by the specific teams who are concentrating on the vaccination programme. So, please don't call your practice, the NHS will contact you when it's your turn.

- **How are people being contacted about their vaccination?**

Networks of local GP practices are working together and using the usual range of communications methods available to them to make contact with patients.

- **How are you choosing who to vaccinate?**

Patients are being prioritised for the vaccine according to the national prioritisation criteria; currently this is the over 80s and care home staff. More information about the prioritisation criteria is available [here](#)

- **Where are the clinics delivering vaccinations?**

Vaccines will be offered in a range of community settings. Some teams will visit people to offer the vaccine, for example in care homes, other people may have to go to the nearest centre. Because some of the vaccine has to be stored in a very low temperature freezer, it is not possible to deliver it from all GP practices.

- **What if the centre I am offered is not easy to get to?**

Please try to attend the vaccination centre you are offered. If you cannot attend that centre you may have to wait to get the vaccine. More clinics will open in the coming weeks and months.

- **Should I still go to my vaccination appointment if I'm in Tier 4?**

Leaving the house for medical reasons, including a Covid-19 vaccination appointment, is allowed in **all** local restriction Tiers. So if you are contacted by the NHS to book a vaccination appointment, it's crucial that you attend. Each service is carefully planned with strict safety measure in place.