

Coronavirus Vaccination in Devon

Briefing #4 – 29 January 2021

Key messages

- Every time someone in Devon is vaccinated, it brings us a small step closer to the end of the pandemic.
- Two new large-scale vaccination centres opened in Devon on Tuesday (26 January) at Home Park, Plymouth, and Westpoint Exeter, creating the potential for thousands more vaccinations each week.
- Three pharmacies in Devon are now offering booked vaccine appointments to people who have received a letter from the national booking system.
- Even when you have been vaccinated, you must still continue to follow the COVID-19 safety rules – stay at home as much as possible and remember hands, face, space.
- Beware vaccine scammers – remember the vaccine is free and only available on the NHS; and you will never be asked for financial information if contacted for an appointment.
- 97% of care homes across Devon have now received a vaccine visit from local GPs – teams have worked tirelessly to vaccinate vulnerable people and those who look after them.
- **145,148** people had received their first jab in the NHS Devon CCG area up to 24 January and around 80% of people aged 80 and above have been vaccinated in Devon.

A guide to how people are being vaccinated in Devon

- There are five main ways people in Devon are accessing vaccination services.
1. **Hospital Hubs** – 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. Arrangements at the hospitals vary.
 2. **GP-led local vaccination services** – the county’s GP practices are working together in groups (called primary care networks (PCNs)) to set up local vaccination centres. Across the county, [20 centres are now in operation](#), serving all of Devon practices
 - Each GP practice and PCN in Devon continues to work through patient lists in priority order, [as set by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations](#).
 - This means practices are vaccinating their over 80s before moving to their over-75s and then their over-70s.
 - Different centres are at different stages in vaccinating their over-80s because:
 - Some areas have a higher proportion of over-80s than other areas
 - Some vaccination sites started before others, meaning they have had longer to work through their list of patients

- Capacity to vaccinate varies slightly between sites – this is influenced by vaccine supply, the size of the site and the number of staff available
 - In light of the above, over-80s who hear of people in their 70s being vaccinated, either in Devon or further afield, need not worry that they have been missed and there is no need to contact the NHS. Practices are working through their own patient lists in priority order, as fast and as safely as possible, and will contact everyone in turn.
 - In a limited number of cases, GP-led sites are holding day clinics at additional practice sites to help make access to vaccination services easier for people living in rural or isolated areas.
 - GP practices are using a range of ways to contact their patients, including phonecall, letter, text message (SMS), and, in a limited number of cases, email. In light of this, recipients need to be vigilant to guard against scams, a number of which have been reported this week – see the section below for more information.
3. **Care homes and people who are house bound** – The GP-led centres have now visited nearly all the county's care homes for older people to vaccinate residents and staff. They are now working with community nursing teams to vaccinate people who can't leave their house to be vaccinated, starting with the over-80s. When vaccinating people who are housebound, only other members of the household [who are within the JCVI groups 1-4](#) can be vaccinated at present.
4. **Large-scale vaccination centres** (see above) began offering appointments to people in the priority groups who have received letters from a national booking system from Tuesday. The Devon sites are Home Park, Plymouth, and Westpoint Exeter. People in Devon can also be vaccinated at large-scale sites in other counties if this is more convenient, for example at Taunton Racecourse in Somerset.
- Anyone who cannot or does not want to travel to one of the large sites can be vaccinated by their local GP service – just wait for the call, text or letter.
 - If a patient receives a letter from a large-scale Vaccination Centre, it does not mean they have been taken off their GP list. Patients do not need to let their GP practice know if they get vaccinated at a large-scale centre.
 - Appointments at the large-scale sites, which are offered by letter via a nationally-run booking system, are staggered to allow for social distancing and people are urged not to turn up early to avoid queues.
 - The letter from the national system includes a unique code that is used to make the appointment.
 - It is possible someone might receive more than one invitation to be vaccinated as correspondence effectively crosses in the post. In this case, recipients can book/confirm at their preferred venue and disregard other correspondence – but they must not attend both. There is no need to contact the NHS separately to let us know which one you have chosen.
 - Anyone who arranges an appointment at one site and then books an appointment at another venue, must cancel the first slot to ensure others can have the vaccination.
 - You cannot be vaccinated by just turning up.
5. **Selected pharmacy sites**
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- As of 28 January, three pharmacies in Devon are offering appointments for coronavirus vaccinations to people in priority groups who have received letters from a national booking system.
- They are located at:
 - Plymouth Cricket Ground, Devonport, run by Devonport Pharmacy
 - Lewis Pharmacy, Exeter Road, Exmouth
 - Westward Ho! Baptist Church, run by Arnolds Pharmacy, Westward Ho! (began operation on 23 January)
- Vaccines are given by appointment only to people who have booked a time after receiving a letter from the national booking service.
- See the information in point 4 above regarding appointments at large-scale vaccination centres, which also applies to pharmacy sites.
- NHS England is running the roll-out of community pharmacy sites and is due to announce more in coming weeks.

Large-scale vaccination centres

- The Mayflower Grandstand at **Plymouth Argyle Football Club's Home Park Stadium**, and exhibition and event venue **Westpoint Exeter** [opened for their first booked appointments](#) to people in priority groups on 26 January.
- The sites mean thousands more vaccinations will be given every week in Devon and provide local people have a wider choice of options when they receive their invitation for an appointment.
- Media facilities were arranged at both sites and the openings were covered widely and positively by local television, radio, digital and print media.
- The Home Park site will be managed by University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, which runs the city's Derriford Hospital.
- Westpoint Exeter will be managed by the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (RD&E), which runs the city's Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.
- Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council also supported the project to open the sites, as did a team of volunteers from Network Rail.
- Staff from the Exeter Chiefs are among the volunteers working at Westpoint.
- For more on large-scale vaccination centres, see 'A guide to how people are being vaccinated in Devon' above.

Vaccination data for Devon

- As of 21 January, [vaccination data published on Thursdays by NHS England and NHS Improvement](#) includes information for local NHS systems.
- In Devon, this covers Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
- This week's data shows that **145,148** people have received their first jab in the NHS Devon CCG area up to 24 January, an increase of 58,799 on last week.
- Data also show approximately 80% of people aged 80 and above have been vaccinated in Devon.
- The proportion of people aged over 80 in Devon is higher than the regional and national average.
- From this week the data also contains national figures on the number of people vaccinated by ethnicity.



Beware vaccination scams

- There have been widespread reports of scammers using the vaccination programme to target people this week, often asking them to supply financial information.
- GP practices are using a variety of ways to get in touch with local people to offer vaccinations, including phonecall, letter, text message (SMS), and, in a limited number of cases, email.
- Coronavirus vaccines are only available on the NHS. You can be contacted by the NHS, your employer, or a GP surgery local to you, to receive your vaccine.
- The vaccine is free of charge. At no point will you be asked to pay.
- No matter which method is used, it is important that both patients and staff are aware that the NHS:
 - will never ask you for your bank account or card details.
 - will never ask you for your PIN or banking password.
 - will never arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine.
 - will never ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips.
- Information on how you will be contacted regarding the vaccination can be found [here](#).
- If you think you have been a victim of fraud or identify theft, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

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.

Follow the safety rules, even after vaccination

- Devon County Council's Director of Public Health, Steve Brown, has warned people not to flout COVID-19 rules, even after they have had the jab. In a message to local people he said:
- The vaccination protects those who have had it from becoming seriously ill with coronavirus, but there is no evidence yet to suggest that the vaccination stops a person from actually catching the virus, nor therefore prevents them from transmitting the virus to others.
- 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.
- That means: keep up with social distancing, wear face coverings in public spaces, and wash your hands properly and regularly.
- Continue to stay at home and avoid unnecessary journeys out of the house.
- If you are identified as a close contact of a person who has tested positive you will still need to self-isolate for 10 days, even if you have had the vaccine.
- If you've been vaccinated because you work in health or social care, you still need to be tested regularly to ensure that you're not infectious, even if you show no symptoms.

Vaccinations in care homes

- In the **Devon CCG** area, for older people's homes, **97%** of homes have had vaccination visits as of today (29 January).
- The small number of remaining homes will be visited as soon as possible, subject to ongoing risk assessments
- GPs, their teams, local authorities and care home managers and their staff across Torbay, Devon and Plymouth have been working extremely hard to make sure people in care homes get their vaccination as soon as possible and many thousands of doses have been delivered in recent days.
- It is testimony to their dedication to their residents that they have been working long hours and across weekends to deliver the vaccines to some of the most vulnerable people in their communities.

Other important information

- To avoid wastage, vaccination sites have been ensuring unfilled appointments are used to vaccinate health and social care staff wherever possible, using measures such as reserve lists of people they can call on at short notice. Vaccination beyond the [current cohorts \(1-4\)](#) can be [offered](#) if there is a risk that current vaccine stock will become unviable if not used.
- Supplies remain limited, meaning we need to ensure all the doses we do have go to those people who need them most.

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

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