

PUBLIC COVID VACCINATION FAQs – LINCOLNSHIRE

12th January 2021 Update

SAFETY

Q. Is the new COVID-19 vaccine safe to use?

A. The vaccine has been approved to use. A dedicated team of MHRA scientists and clinicians carried out a rigorous, scientific and detailed review of all the available data, starting in October 2020.

The MHRA expert scientists and clinicians reviewed data from the laboratory pre-clinical studies, clinical trials, manufacturing and quality controls, product sampling and testing of the final vaccine and also considered the conditions for its safe supply and distribution.

[The National Institute for Biological Standards and Control](#), part of the agency, has been and will continue doing, independent laboratory testing so that every batch of the vaccine meets the expected standards of safety and quality.

Q. How effective is the vaccine?

A. The first vaccine to be approved is the Pfizer vaccine. The vaccine is given in two doses and data from clinical trials showed the vaccine is 94% effective in protecting people over the age of 65 from coronavirus, with trials suggesting it works equally well in people of all ages, races and ethnicities. There were also no serious safety concerns reported in the trials. It is important that you receive both doses of the vaccination.

The Astra Zeneca vaccine was approved on 30th December 2020, and we will update details regarding this vaccine ahead of its national delivery launch on 4th January 2021.

Q. Are there any known or anticipated side effects?

A. Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. Even if you do have symptoms after the first dose, you still need to have the second dose. You may not be protected until at least seven days after your second dose of the vaccine.

Very common side effects include:

- Having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection. This tends to be worst around 1-2 days after the vaccine
- Feeling tired
- Headache
- General aches, or mild flu like symptoms

As with all vaccines, appropriate treatment and care will be available in case of a rare anaphylactic event following administration.

The MHRA have advised that people with a history of allergic reactions do not receive the vaccination.

Q. Should pregnant women have the vaccination?

A. The JCVI has updated it's guidance on COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy, stating:

- that vaccination for women who are pregnant “should only be considered when the potential benefits outweigh any potential risks for the mother and foetus” (previous advice was against vaccinating pregnant women)
- that women who are breastfeeding can now be given either vaccine.
- that those who are trying to become pregnant do not need to avoid pregnancy after vaccination.

Q. What is the evidence to show the vaccine is safe for BAME communities?

A. The phase three study of the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine demonstrated a vaccine efficacy of 95%, with consistent efficacy across age, gender and ethnicity. Overall, among the participants who received the COVID-19 vaccine 82.1% were White, 9.6% were Black or African American, 26.1% were Hispanic/Latino, 4.3% were Asian and 0.7% were Native American/Alaskan.

Q. I have had my flu vaccine, do I need the COVID-19 vaccine as well?

A. The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. If you are eligible for both vaccines you should have them both, but normally separated by at least a week.

Q. Will the COVID-19 vaccine protect me from flu?

A. No, the COVID-19 vaccine will not protect you against the flu. If you have been offered a flu vaccine, please try to have this as soon as possible to help protect you, your family and friends from flu this winter.

Q. Is the vaccine vegan/vegetarian friendly?

A. Yes, the Pfizer vaccine does not contain any meat derivatives or porcine products.

If, and when, further vaccines are approved we will publish information about known allergens or ingredients that are important for certain faiths, cultures and beliefs.

Q. Which vaccine is better/more effective?

- Both Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca are very effective vaccines. Comparisons between the vaccine efficacies are unhelpful due to the different methodologies used.
- It's not as simple as saying one vaccine is better than the other. An effective vaccine will save lives and reduce hospitalisations.
- Comparing vaccines on a simple percentage of effectiveness is a mistake. A vaccine with slightly lower headline efficacy than another may prove to be the one that offers more durable protection or a greater effect on transmission
- Both vaccines have been approved because they pass the MHRA's tests on safety and efficacy, so people should be assured that whatever vaccine they get will be highly effective and protect them from Coronavirus.

Q. How do I report any side effects from having a COVID-19 vaccination?

A. If you suffer any side effects following a COVID-19 vaccination, you should complete the coronavirus yellow card form available online to help share information about reactions to the national vaccine development team.

This is the link to the online form: <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

Q. Is this vaccine being delivered by volunteers in Lincolnshire?

A. No. All vaccinators are fully qualified, and have received an additional, specific training program relating to the delivery of this vaccine.

Some volunteers are supporting with admin functions.

Should both vaccines be given in two doses?

- The MHRA authorisation includes conditions that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine should be administered in two doses, with the second dose given between 4 and 12 weeks after the first
- The MHRA has also clarified that for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, the interval between doses must be at least 3 weeks (21 days). This also aligns with the EMA position on the Pfizer vaccine.
- For both vaccines, data provided to MHRA demonstrate that whilst efficacy is optimised when a second dose is administered both offer considerable protection after a single dose, at least in the short term. For both vaccines the second dose completes the course and is likely to be important for longer term protection.

Does one dose of the vaccine offer protection?

- The JCVI has recommended that as many people on the JCVI priority list as possible should be offered a first vaccine dose as the initial priority. This is because one dose of the vaccine offers important protection and we want to reach as many at risk people as possible in order to offer protection until the second dose can be administered.
- They have advised that the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine may be given between 3 to 12 weeks following the first dose, and that the second dose of the AstraZeneca (Oxford) vaccine may be given between 4 to 12 weeks following the first dose. The clinical risk priority order for deployment of the vaccines remains unchanged and applies to both vaccines. Both are very effective vaccines.

Why are you prioritising the first dose?

- The JCVI has recommended that as many people on the JCVI priority list as possible should be offered a first vaccine dose as the initial priority.
- The four UK Chief Medical Officers agree with JCVI that at this stage of the pandemic prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list will protect the greatest number of at risk people overall in the shortest possible time and will have the greatest impact on reducing mortality, severe disease and hospitalisations and in protecting the NHS and equivalent health services.
- Operationally this will mean that second doses of both vaccines will be administered towards the end of the recommended vaccine dosing schedule of 12 weeks. This will maximise the number of people getting vaccine and therefore receiving protection in the next 12 weeks.
- NHS delivery plans should prioritise delivering first vaccine doses to as many people on the JCVI Phase 1 priority list in the shortest possible timeframe. This will allow the administration of second doses to be completed over the longer timeframes in line with conditions set out by the independent regulator, the MHRA, and advice from the JCVI. This will maximise the impact of the vaccine programme in its primary aims of reducing mortality and hospitalisations and protecting the NHS and equivalent health services.

What about people who have already had their 2nd dose after 3 weeks? Is this safe? Will they be protected?

- Yes. The updating of the dosing interval is not a safety issue but is designed to maximise the impact of the vaccination programme, as advised by the JCVI.

PRIORITY GROUPS

Q. Where will people get the vaccine?

The NHS is rapidly putting in place new delivery channels tailored to the particular logistical requirements of the first Covid vaccines to be approved:

- **Hospital Hubs:** Dozens of NHS trusts will act as hospital hubs where patients and staff can be vaccinated on site.
- **Local Vaccination Services:** To make it as easy as possible for those who are eligible to access a vaccination safely, Local Vaccination Services will also be available. These community and primary care-led services will vary based on local and logistical considerations but will include GP practices, local authority sourced buildings or other local facilities and as vaccine supply increases in the New Year, local pharmacies too.
- **Vaccination Centres:** The NHS will also establish vaccination centres, where large numbers of people will be able to go and get a jab. The majority will open in the New Year when supply of the vaccine increases. They are being set up in local venues such as sports stadiums and concert venues that offer the physical space to deal with large numbers of people while maintaining social distancing.

Q. Who will get the vaccine first and why?

A. The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) will advise Government on which vaccine/s the UK should use, and priority groups to receive the vaccine based on the best available clinical, modelling and epidemiological data. This will depend on the properties of the vaccine, those most at need (including health and care workers) and the unique medical circumstances of individuals.

The NHS will follow clinical guidance by DHSC and JCVI on the prioritised people eligible for COVID-19 vaccine and therefore plan for vaccine rollout accordingly.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination Immunisation has published advice on priority groups in order of priority:

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. All those 75 years of age and over
4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. All those 65 years of age and over.
6. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. All those 60 years of age and over
8. All those 55 years of age and over
9. All those 50 years of age and over

Q. How will people know when it is their time to get the vaccine?

A. When it is the right time people will receive an invitation to come forward. For most people this will be a letter, either from their GP or the national NHS. This letter will include all the information a person will need to book appointments, including your NHS number.

Please remember it will take time for us to vaccinate everyone who is eligible. Our first priority is the most at risk as determined by the JCVI.

We are asking the public not to contact the NHS to get an appointment until you get this letter. We would be grateful if you would help us to share this message over the coming weeks

You do not need to do anything.

Q. Who should not have the vaccination?

A. The vaccines do not contain living organisms, and so are safe for people with disorders of the immune system. These people may not respond so well to the vaccine. A very small number of people who are at risk of COVID-19 cannot have the vaccine – this includes people who have severe allergies to a component in the vaccine.

Q. I have an illness/ long term condition. Should I have the vaccine if offered it?

A. The vaccine will also be offered to adults with conditions such as: • a blood cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma) • diabetes • dementia • a heart problem • a chest complaint or breathing difficulties, including bronchitis, emphysema or severe asthma • a kidney disease • a liver disease • lowered immunity due to disease or treatment (such as HIV infection, steroid medication, chemotherapy or radiotherapy) • rheumatoid arthritis, lupus or psoriasis • liver disease • having had an organ transplant • having had a stroke or a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) • a neurological or muscle wasting condition • a severe or profound learning disability • a problem with your spleen, e.g sickle cell disease, or having had your spleen removed • are seriously overweight (BMI of 40 and above) • are severely mentally ill All people who are in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable group will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. Whether you are offered the vaccine may depend on the severity of your condition. Your GP can advise on whether you are eligible.

Q. If I am currently self-isolating, should I go and get vaccinated?

A. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating, waiting for a COVID-19 test or unsure if you are fit and well. If you are positive, self-isolating, waiting for a COVID-19 test or unsure if you are fit and well you should follow government guidelines.

Q. I'm currently ill with COVID-19, can I get the vaccine?

A. People currently unwell and experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine until they have recovered. If you are positive, self-isolating, waiting for a COVID-19 test or unsure if you are fit and well you should follow government guidelines.

Q. If I have had a positive Covid test in the past, am I still entitled to get vaccinated?

A. Yes, however as clinical deterioration can occur up to two weeks after infection, ideally vaccination should be deferred until clinical recovery and at least four weeks after onset of symptoms or four weeks from the first PCR positive specimen in those who are asymptomatic

If you have prolonged COVID-19 symptoms you can still receive your COVID-19 vaccine. However, if you are seriously debilitated, still under active investigation, or have recently suffered deterioration in your condition then deferral of vaccination may need to be considered. If this is the case, you should discuss this with your GP prior to booking a vaccination appointment.

Q. Are people who are under 18 are eligible for the vaccine?

A. Only young people age 16-18 years, who are employed in, studying or in training for health and social care work should be offered vaccination alongside their colleagues if a suitable vaccine is available.

LINCOLNSHIRE'S VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Q. Where is the vaccine available in Lincolnshire?

A. Please visit this link to see all the national COVID vaccination locations:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/hospital-hubs-and-local-vaccination-services/>

Q. Who will be offered the vaccine at Lincolnshire's hospital hubs?

A. The order in which people will receive the vaccine is decided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and they have advised that age is the single greatest risk of mortality from COVID-19. After over eighty year olds, care home staff and priority healthcare staff were amongst the first to be offered the vaccine. We have begun to vaccinate all of these groups in Lincolnshire.

Those in the over 80 age group will be inpatients and outpatients who will already be at Lincoln County Hospital and who we can safely vaccinate in the first instance.

Care home staff from across the county are eligible to be offered the vaccine immediately too.

Those NHS provider staff (ULHT, LPFT, LCHS) across Lincolnshire who are most at risk are also being prioritised.

Not all people in the above groups will be contacted immediately but in accordance with available vaccine and appointment slots.

Q. Who will be offered the vaccine through Lincolnshire's primary care programme?

A. The order in which people will receive the vaccine is decided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and they have advised that age is the single greatest risk of mortality from COVID-19. Our primary care led community model will prioritise those in the over 80 age group initially.

Q. I am over 80. Why have I not yet been invited for my vaccine?

As we deploy the vaccine, we continue to risk assess patient safety on a case by case basis, alongside the appropriateness and safety of transporting the vaccine. We're continuing our work to ensure we can safely offer as many of this priority group the vaccine as possible at both the hospital hub and through primary care, in accordance with availability. If you are registered with your GP, you will shortly be receiving your invitation.

Q. Why are not all GP surgeries taking part in Lincolnshire's primary care vaccination programme?

Local vaccination centres are not always a 'like for like' with practices, as they are delivered via primary care networks. For example, our vaccination centres at both Louth County Hospital and Grantham Meres Tennis centre are staffed by teams from different local practices coming together to ensure that they are able to get the service in the right place for the local community. Therefore, whilst not 100% of surgeries in the county will deliver vaccinations, 100% of the appropriate population registered with them will be able to access vaccinations by a joined up approach between neighbouring GPs.

Q. I CAN'T GET TO MY NEAREST VAC CENTRE

- A. We are working with our LCC colleagues to ensure there is support to access in this instance:
- Any GP or Booking Team can refer individuals to (or call on behalf of patients) the Customer Transport Helpline on 0345 456 4474.
 - <https://lincsbus.info/accessing-lincolnshire-transport/transport-helpline/>
 - The helpline operates 09:30 – 17:30 Monday to Friday and 10:00 – 15:00 Saturday.
 - They can book journeys anywhere between 1 hour and 1 week in advance.
 - Capacity is good at the minute due to a lower than normal level of demand because of COVID-19 and lockdown.
 - The advice they give can cover public transport, community transport and the countywide CallConnect service
 - The CallConnect service is an on demand bus service that is paid for by the customer <https://lincsbus.info/callconnect/>
 - If someone has a concessionary bus pass due to age or disability then they can access CallConnect free of charge. For the purposes of the vaccination programme only, Transport Services have agreed to extend this free to anyone aged 80 and over, regardless of whether they have a bus pass or not.

Q. When will I receive my second dose vaccination?

A. National guidance has updated the dosing schedule to up to twelve weeks. In Lincolnshire, we are currently scheduling second doses in at week eleven.

Here is a letter from senior clinical figures to the profession laying out their reasoning for this change <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-the-profession-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-the-uk-covid-19-vaccination-programmes/letter-to-the-profession-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-regarding-the-uk-covid-19-vaccination-programmes>

LARGE VACCINATION CENTRE BOOKING INFO (NATIONAL)

Q: I've contacted the national booking service but I can't travel to one of the locations that are available, what should I do?

More locations will become available in the coming weeks so you could try again later.

Alternatively, you can choose to wait until your local GP service invites you for the vaccine.

If you are housebound and unable to leave the house to travel to any appointment, and cannot arrange for someone to help you, your local NHS services will be in contact with you.

Q: I have received a letter but I have already booked or attended an appointment at a local GP service. What should I do?

If you already have a vaccination booked through your GP please ignore the letter – there is nothing you need to do.

Q: I have the letter but don't understand how I book my appointment?

If you have received a letter from the national booking centre inviting you to book your Covid-19 vaccination you can do this online or on the phone using the details on the first page of the letter.

You will need your name, date of birth and NHS number to book.

At the time of booking you will be asked to book your first vaccination and your follow up vaccination for 11 to 12 weeks' time.

Q: I have received a letter about booking my appointment. Can I contact my GP to do this?

No, please do not contact your GP surgery. We cannot help you to book into the Vaccination Centre.

Please use the details in the letter to book your appointment directly.

Q: I have received invites to get vaccinated from both a local GP service and the national system, but haven't booked with either yet. Can I choose where to go?

Yes.

Q: Will people who have had their vaccination through a hospital, GP or care home still receive a letter to book through nhs.uk or by ringing 119?

This may happen in a small number of cases.

If people have had their first vaccination through a hospital or GP service, or if they are in a care home, this information will flow through to the national NHS system.

If this is recorded on the national system before the national booking letter is printed then it will flag not to send that person the national booking letter. There are likely to be cases where the letter is printed to be sent and then person subsequently has their vaccination recorded and therefore is sent the national booking letter. The booking letter explains this and says that if people have already had their first dose to not book through nhs.uk or 119.

Q: My neighbours / friends have received a letter from the national vaccination centre to book their jab. Why haven't I received mine?

The NHS is inviting people for vaccinations based on expert advice on who would benefit most. This has been set by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#). At the moment we are focusing on people aged 80 and over, people who live or work in care homes, and health and social care staff.

If you are in one of these groups you will be invited to book your vaccine soon.

A vaccination programme of this size and scale will still take some time to roll out in full. Please be assured that everyone who needs the vaccine will be offered it.

The NHS will be in touch with you when it is your turn to be vaccinated. Please don't call us before you are invited.

Q: What will the opening hours of vaccination centres be?

Standard opening times for vaccination centres will be 8am – 8pm, seven days a week.

Q: What are the operating hours of the telephone booking system?

The telephone booking service will be open 16 hours a day (from 7am until 11pm), seven days a week. People will also be able to book online 24/7.

Q: What if I can't get to the Vaccination Centre?

People who are housebound will be contacted by their GP services about alternative ways to get vaccinated. People can also wait until more locations closer to where they live become available. The NHS will follow up with people that haven't booked their appointment, as a reminder.

Q: What staff and volunteers will be working in Vaccination Centres?

The centres will be staffed by vaccinators and clinical supervisors, as well as administrative staff and stewards to ensure the effective and safe operation of the service.

These will largely be new and existing paid NHS staff, but volunteers – including from St John Ambulance or the NHS Volunteer Responder programme - will also play an important role.

Q: Are Vaccination Centres safe?

Yes. Staff at these sites will wear appropriate PPE and there will be social distancing and cleaning measures in place to keep everyone safe.

Q: I've received a letter but someone I live with who is the same age hasn't yet. Can we get vaccinated together?

The NHS is inviting eligible people in a phased basis as supplies of the vaccine allow. It is important that you wait for your letter from the NHS, and you will not be able to book without one.

If you have received a letter and live with someone who is also eligible but has not received a letter, it is likely that theirs will follow shortly. If you like you can wait and book at the same time.

Q: What should people do if they can't get through to the phone line straight away?

At times, due to high demand, the phone line will get very busy, which may mean waiting on the line for a while or calling back later. You can alternatively book online.

If you need help to do this, please ask someone in your support bubble.

Q: Does this service work for people who don't understand English well or are deaf?

The phone line will have interpreters and a BSL facility available on request to help you book your appointments.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR VACCINATION

Q. I have an appointment for my vaccination, what do I need to know/do?

A. Please attend no more than 5 minutes before your appointment time. You will be asked to complete a consent form on arrival which will be used to submit vaccination data.

Please DO NOT ATTEND if you are exhibiting any signs of COVID illness.

Please ensure you wear a face mask at all times whilst in attendance, adhere to social distancing guidelines and use the hand sanitiser available.

You are expected to wait for 15 minutes after your vaccination to ensure you exhibit no immediate complications. Please allow for this in your visit time

Q. Do I need to complete a consent form in advance of my appointment?

A. You will be asked to complete a consent form on arrival at the vaccination hub which will be used to submit vaccination data.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Here are links to two leaflets produced by Public Health England which will give you additional information. The first is '[Covid-19 Vaccination – A guide for adults](#)' and the second is '[What to expect after your Covid-19 Vaccination](#)'.

There are a number of other documents relating to the new coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination programme on the [GOV.UK](#).

The current list of HHs and LVSs is here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/hospital-hubs-and-local-vaccination-services/>