

FAQS

About the vaccine

What vaccine for COVID-19 is currently available?

Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines are now available. Both vaccines have been shown to be safe and offer high levels of protection, and have been given regulatory approval by the MHRA.

The Government has in principle secured access to seven different vaccine candidates, across four different vaccine types, totalling over 357 million doses. This includes:

- 40 million doses of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine
- 100m doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.
- 7 million doses of the Moderna vaccine, which is also being assessed by the MHRA.

Is the NHS confident the vaccine is safe?

Yes. The NHS will not offer any Covid-19 vaccinations to the public until experts have signed off that it is safe to do so. The MHRA, the official UK regulator, has said this vaccine is very safe and highly effective, and we have full confidence in their expert judgement and processes.

As with any medicine, vaccines are highly regulated products. Vaccines go through several stages of lab tests and clinical trials before they can be approved for use.

There is continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

Vaccines are designed to prevent people from getting serious infectious diseases. It is much safer for your immune system to learn how to fight illnesses through vaccination than by catching and treating them.

Can people pick what vaccine they want?

Any vaccines that the NHS will provide will have been approved because they pass the MHRA's tests on safety and efficacy, so people should be assured that whatever vaccine they get, it is worth their while.

Who is getting vaccinated now?

Vaccinations in England started on 8 December, with Margaret Keenan becoming the first person to be vaccinated in Coventry. Across the country, care home staff, those aged 80 years of age and over, as well as NHS staff considered to be a risk will be offered vaccination in line with JCVI recommendations, and we are now rolling out vaccines in care homes. Figures on the number of people vaccinated are published weekly and can be found here: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/healthcare>

Our ambition, if supplies allow, is to have offered vaccines to the most vulnerable 13 million people by the middle of February.

Am I at increased risk from COVID-19 infection?

Coronavirus can affect anyone. If you are an older adult and have a long-term health condition, COVID-19 can be very serious and in some cases fatal.

You should have the COVID-19 vaccine if you are:

- An adult living or working in a care home for the elderly
- A frontline healthcare worker
- A frontline social care worker
- A carer working in domiciliary care looking after older adults
- Aged 65 years and over
- younger adults with long-term clinical conditions
(see [https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/#:~:text=People%20at%20moderate%20risk%20\(clinically%20vulnerable\)&text=are%2070%20or%20older,have%20diabetes](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/#:~:text=People%20at%20moderate%20risk%20(clinically%20vulnerable)&text=are%2070%20or%20older,have%20diabetes))

I am in one of the listed groups above, why do I have to wait?

This is the biggest vaccination programme in UK history, which means it will take time to vaccinate all the eligible people.

The 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 the supply of the right type of vaccine. This is because only some vaccines can be transported between people's homes.

How long does the vaccine take to become effective?

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of your suffering from COVID-19 disease. You may not be protected until at least seven days after your second dose of the vaccine.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection. Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe

We don't yet know whether it will stop people from catching and passing on the virus, but we do expect it to reduce this risk. So, it is still important that people continue to follow social distancing rules for the time being.

Why is it important to get your COVID-19 vaccination?

Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe

The COVID-19 vaccine should help reduce the rates of serious illness and save lives and will therefore reduce pressure on the NHS and social care services.

Is the vaccine vegan/vegetarian friendly/ suitable for Muslim and Jewish people?

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.

Who cannot have the vaccine?

The vaccines do not contain living organisms and 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. Women of childbearing age, those who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding should read the detailed information on www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination.

People who are suffering from a fever-type illness should also postpone having the vaccine until they have recovered.

How effective are the vaccines? How long do they take to work?

The MHRA have said these vaccines are highly effective, but to get full protection people need to come back for the second dose – this is really important.

To ensure as many people are vaccinated as quickly as possible, the Department for Health and Social Care now advise that the second dose of both the OxfordAstraZeneca and the Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine should be scheduled up to 12 weeks apart.

Full protection kicks in around a week or two after that second dose, which is why it's also important that when you do get invited, you act on that and get yourself booked in as soon as possible. Even those who have received a vaccine still need to follow social distancing and other guidance.

How does the vaccine work?

The vaccine works by making a protein from the virus that is important for creating protection.

The protein works in the same way they do for other vaccines by stimulating the immune system to make antibodies and cells to fight the infection.

Can I give COVID-19 to anyone, after I have had the vaccine?

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection, and two doses will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill. We do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus. So, it is important to follow the guidance in your local area to protect those around you.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- Practise social distancing
- Wear a face mask
- Wash your hands carefully and frequently
- Follow the current guidance www.gov.uk/coronavirus

After I have had the vaccine will I still need to follow all the infection control advice?

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection, and two doses will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill. No vaccine is completely effective and it will take a few weeks for your body to build up protection. So, you will still need to follow the guidance in your workplace, including wearing the correct personal protection equipment and taking part in any screening programmes.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- Practise social distancing
- Wear a face mask
- Wash your hands carefully and frequently
- Follow the current guidance www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Should people who have already had Covid-19 get vaccinated?

Yes, if they are in a priority group identified by JCVI. The MHRA have looked at this and decided that getting vaccinated is just as important for those who have already had Covid-19 as it is for those who haven't.

Do I need to leave a space between having the flu vaccine and having the Covid vaccine?

It is not essential to leave time between the flu and Covid vaccine but it is recommended that there should be a gap of a week. We would always encourage anyone who is eligible but not yet taken up their flu jab to do so as soon as possible.

About the roll out of the vaccine

Will all adults receive their Covid-19 vaccine by the autumn?

Our goal remains to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible, with the prioritisation guided by advice from the JCVI. The expansion of the programme will mean all adults will be offered a vaccine by the autumn.

When will care homes receive the vaccination?

The roll out of vaccinations within care homes started last week at three care homes and a further 8 care homes have received the vaccine this week. This important piece of work will continue to be rolled out to care homes across the city and county.

How will patients be invited for a vaccination?

When it is the right time people will receive an invitation. For most people, this will be in the form of a letter from either their GP or the national booking system. This will include all the information they need, including their NHS number.

This is the biggest vaccination programme in UK history, which means it will take time to vaccinate all the eligible people. We know lots of people will be eager to get protected but we are asking people not to contact the NHS to get an appointment until they get their letter.

Why is the booking link being shared?

It's unfortunate that the booking information intended for the priority recipients of the invitation to book their covid-19 vaccine has been circulated. We are continuing to ask residents to wait to be contacted by the NHS and until then please continue to observe all the social distancing and national lockdown rules. Once you have your letter it will have all the information that you need to book your vaccination appointment and you should act quickly to make your appointment either online or via a dedicated phone line for people who might not be able to use the website

Is the Swiftqueue link legitimate?

The NHS locally is using software provided by SwiftQueue to facilitate the booking in of patients for their vaccine. SwiftQueue is only providing the appointment booking software, all the vaccine deployment and administration is being delivered in-house by the NHS. We would ask that if you see a link to this site you help us by not sharing.

When will the top 4 priority cohorts be vaccinated?

We understand the public are keen to see themselves and their relatives vaccinated as soon as possible and that this is a worrying time. We would like to reassure you that all of our modelling indicates that, as long as we continue to receive supply of the vaccine, we are on track to deliver the vaccines to the top four cohorts in line with the Prime Minister's deadline of mid-February. These cohorts include older care home residents and staff, everyone over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable. In Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we aim to have all over 80s vaccinated by the end of January subject to vaccine supply.

Why do we not have more GP surgeries doing vaccines like Leicester for instance?

In Nottingham and Nottinghamshire we have a long history of GP practices working together and our approach to the Covid-19 vaccine roll out is no different. We have taken an approach to maximise our resilience and coverage across the system to initially have fewer, larger sites delivering the vaccine rather than individual GP practices doing it alone. This will evolve and change over time following the announcement today that GPs will be able to vaccinate within their own practices. This will give people more options over the next few weeks as the vaccination programme continues.

When will GPs start vaccinating - Will pharmacies be doing this

Plans are underway to roll out the vaccination programme in pharmacies and GP surgeries across the city and county with an initial pilot taking place this week. We will bring you more information on this in the coming weeks.

When will more sites open?

A number of Local Vaccination Services have already gone live with more sites set to go online in the next few days and weeks. This is a very careful process and several rigorous checks take place to ensure safety, accessibility, power supplies, security and many other factors. It is a process that takes time which cannot be rushed and we are grateful for the public's patience.

How many people have been vaccinated so far?

NHS England will publish a detailed breakdown of their figures every week which will include vaccinations in England by region. The daily vaccination statistics are published daily on the Covid-19 [dashboard](#).

Are you changing the interval because we don't have enough vaccine?

No. The decision to update the dosing interval is based on advice from the JCVI and MHRA and is designed to maximise the impact of the programme and save lives.

When will the public be likely to receive their second dose?

The Clinical Leaders across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire have together reviewed the recent national guidance, and have agreed that all individuals will have their 2nd appointment scheduled between 10 and 12 weeks after their first appointment. These arrangements will only be altered where there are exceptional clinical reasons for the second dose to be administered outside this time period. This will be determined on a case by case basis by a small independent panel.

How can I complain if I am unhappy with the service?

If a patient, or someone on their behalf, is unhappy with the care received at one of the vaccination centres we would ask that they talk directly to the staff involved at the time. However, if this is not possible, or if they feel staff have been unable help, or they remain dissatisfied they can contact the Sherwood Forest Hospital's Patient Experience Team:

Telephone: 01623 672222, Monday – Friday, between 9am – 5pm
Email: sfh-tr.pet@nhs.net

I am over 80 and haven't received my letter, what should I do?

Letters are in the process of being sent out to all over 80s. Please wait for your letter before booking your appointment. It is hoped that all over 80s will have received a letter and booked their appointment by the end of January.

My neighbour/friend has a letter, I am over 80 and don't have a letter can I book?

Letters are in the process of being sent out to all over 80s. Please wait for your letter before contacting the NHS, your GP or local hospital hub – the letter will have full details of how to make an appointment. Do not call your GP or turn up at A&E or your doctor's surgery – the only way to get an appointment and the job is to follow the instructions in the letter.

Transport FAQs

How can people get to vaccination sites?

Most people will book their appointments for either vaccination centres and local vaccinations services via an online booking link, and will make their own way to the site. To ensure that those in vulnerable groups or who are geographically or socially isolated can access community vaccination services as soon as possible, the vaccination programme has made provision for a limited supply of transport to those who meet eligibility criteria. This will be provided by volunteer drivers and taxis.

I have an older or vulnerable patient – how do they get access to transport?

Where patients are invited to attend for a vaccination but are unable to make their own way or secure transport independently, some transport may be made available. These patients should use the local vaccination appointment booking service by calling the number on their invitation. The local booking service will screen patients for transport needs, and where appropriate will refer to the transport hub. The transport hub is managed by Bassetlaw Action Centre – a voluntary sector transport organiser commissioned by Notts Healthcare as part of the vaccination programme. Patients meeting transport criteria will be referred to the transport hub who will arrange transport.

This patient has equipment needs or requires an escort – is transport still available for them?

Within the transport provision identified there are specialist providers which can accommodate transport and provide passenger assistants where these are essential. This will be discussed with the patient. If the patient's journey is too complex, they will be referred to the roving service to have their vaccination undertaken at a home visit.

Is there a charge?

Where a patient meets the eligibility criteria there is no charge to the patient.

What type of transport is available?

The transport will mainly be provided by volunteer drivers, all of whom will have the necessary checks for safety and assurance. Where a volunteer driver is not available and the journey is necessary a taxi may be used. All taxis will be identified from an approved list of contractors held by the two local authorities.

Generic / alternative FAQs

How will you make sure that you are reaching vulnerable / excluded groups / BAME groups

We are working closely with the voluntary and community groups to help us reach our communities. We held a briefing to these groups before Christmas to update them on the progress and we will be holding a second brief in the next week.

Is it true that vaccines are being wasted?

A very small amount of appointments have been missed and very few vaccines have been wasted. In order to avoid any vaccines being wasted, those administering the vaccine have to make pragmatic decisions to ensure any unfilled appointments are used.

Queues at the Ashfield Health Village site?

Ashfield Health Village was one of our first vaccination centres and prior to opening we ran several simulation events to test the flow through the site and now that we are live staff are trying to ensure that everyone is seen as quickly as possible. We are learning about the process every day and once we noticed an issue with queuing and parking, we amended the system so that no-one will need to queue outside. In addition, we changed the booking information to ask people not to attend more than a few minutes before their appointment time. This should ensure a reduction in waiting times, and given the current temperatures we do not want anyone waiting outside in the cold weather.

A new traffic management support system will direct residents arriving by car and our dedicated site manager will be regularly checking the queuing situation throughout the day to make sure that no issues are building up, and supporting residents to pass through the queue quickly. We want to thank everyone for their patience as we push forward with this new and extremely important vaccination programme.

LE postcode issues:

We are aware there was an issue in the first week of the roll out at Local Vaccination Services. When we were made aware of this we re-briefed the booking team to make sure that they were clear that LE12 residents are definitely proud residents of Nottinghamshire