

This is not an appointment letter but contains important information about the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Please keep this letter somewhere safe for future reference

We are writing to provide information and reassurance to patients, relatives and carers across Norfolk and Waveney. This is the largest vaccination programme ever delivered by the NHS and it will take months to complete, but thanks to the hard work of our local NHS staff and volunteers we continue to make great progress locally.

As more people become eligible to receive their COVID-19 vaccination, we are aware that some people in priority groups for vaccination are still waiting for their appointment. We are working incredibly hard to roll out the vaccine to those most at risk as soon as we possibly can. If this is you, we haven't forgotten about you.

This letter covers:

1. How and when you will get an appointment for your vaccination
2. Where you will get your vaccination
3. Information about attending appointments
4. Information about emails and texts that claim to be from the NHS but are not
5. Information about the first and second vaccine doses

GENERAL ADVICE: Please do not contact your GP - you will get an appointment for a vaccine, we are contacting everyone who is eligible.

We are asking people to be patient and wait for their invitation as health services are incredibly busy at the moment and we are not able to answer enquiries about the vaccine programme.

If you are aged 65 or over, on the Shielded Patient List / CEV, or a frontline health and social care worker and have not yet been offered a vaccination, you should contact the NHS national booking service immediately:

- **Online - [nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](https://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)**
- **By Phone – call 119 (free), between 7am and 11pm seven days a week – the line can get very busy, so people may choose to ring later in the day when it is less busy. British Sign Language, text relay and interpreter services are available.**
- **Please only contact your GP as a last resort only if a suitable slot is not available / offered to you.**

1) How and when you will get an appointment for your vaccination

GP practices and NHS England are identifying people who are in the first priority groups for vaccination. **As of March 2021, these priority groups are:**

- those aged 80 years and over
- those aged over 75 years
- those aged over 70 years, and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (not including pregnant women and those under 16 years of age), and adults with Down's Syndrome
- frontline health care workers
- frontline social care workers
- those aged 65-69
- all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality (a list is available on the [Government website](#))
- Adults on a GP Register for learning disabilities – this will include adults with a severe or profound learning disability
- Carers - the vaccine is also being offered to: *'Those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.'* [This includes parents of disabled children].
 - **Phase 1 – Known / registered carers** – where we have contact details, we are contacting carers directly to come forward for vaccination. You do not need to contact us.
 - **Phase 2 – 'Unknown carers'** - We are asking for anyone who is the sole or primary carer of an older or disabled person who is clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, parents or primary carers of children and young people who are disabled and clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, young carers (aged 16 or over) of people who are elderly or clinically vulnerable, and people caring for someone with severe mental illness to contact us **between now and 31 March 2021** to register themselves as a carer.

You can register as a carer online here:

<http://apps.norfolk.gov.uk/carervax>

If you are unable to register as an eligible carer online, a 24/7 voicemail service is available for people to leave their contact details: 01603 257256

Once patients within the above priority groups have been identified, these lists are then sorted based on clinical need. For example, someone who is younger with serious underlying health conditions may receive the vaccine before someone else who is older but is generally fit and active.

Other factors are also taken into account. For example, patients considered to be 'housebound' would be vaccinated in the community and therefore won't receive an invitation to attend a local vaccination centre at the same time as other people they may know locally. They may have to wait for supply of the right type of vaccine, as only some vaccines can be transported between people's homes.

Vaccination is currently by appointment only for people in the priority groups above.

If you have not yet been invited to make an appointment, you will be contacted in one of two ways over the coming days and weeks:

- 1) A letter, phone call or text from a local GP practice inviting you to make an appointment at a GP surgery - vaccinating patients registered with their own practice as well as patients from other neighbouring practices.
- 2) A letter from NHS England inviting you to make an appointment at a hospital hub, community pharmacy or large vaccination centre via the national booking website or telephone. If patients receive a letter from the national NHS England booking system and would prefer an appointment at a GP practice, they can wait until their Practice contacts them.

Anyone who has mobility / access needs or difficulty getting to a vaccination appointment should discuss that when they are contacted to make an appointment. Support from various community transport services is available for eligible people.

We would encourage anyone who isn't already registered with a GP to do so now; no proof of address or immigration status is needed. Everyone is welcome in General Practice – find out more at www.nhs.uk/register.

If you are not currently included in the list of eligible groups mentioned above, please be patient. As the vaccination programme is rolled out wider over the coming months you will be contacted when it is your turn to get the vaccine.

Once all the people in the above priority groups have been vaccinated, it will then also be offered (in age order) to:

- all those 60 years of age and over
- all those 55 years of age and over
- all those 50 years of age and over

2) Where you will get your vaccinations

There are currently 34 sites vaccinating patients in priority groups (see above) across Norfolk and Waveney:

- 21 GP-led vaccination sites
- Five 'hospital' vaccination hubs: the Norfolk and Norwich, James Paget and Queen Elizabeth hospitals, and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation NHS Trust and Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust who are vaccinating health and care staff
- Seven large scale vaccination centres - Castle Quarter in Norwich, Kings Lynn Corn Exchange, Connaught Hall in Attleborough, North Walsham Community Centre, Lowestoft old Law Courts, Norwich Community Hospital, and the former Paddock Road Surgery in Harleston
- Hayden Chemist in Lowestoft – with other community pharmacies coming online over the coming weeks (see below).

You may be offered a choice of site or you may be given an appointment at a specific site. All sites have parking and are fully accessible.

The vaccination programme across Norfolk and Waveney is continually reviewed to ensure that people don't have to travel more than 10 miles to get a vaccine. More sites that come online will be announced through:

- Our website: www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination-programme
- Social media channels: Twitter @NHSNWCCG and www.facebook.com/NHSNWCCG
- Local newspapers and radio stations

When offered an appointment or invited to make one, please do not delay. The more people we can vaccinate quickly with the first dose, the faster our communities, friends and families are protected from COVID-19.

3) Information about attending vaccination appointments

Please make sure you attend **both** appointments given to you - for your first **and** second dose. These are usually around 12 weeks apart.

When you attend for your vaccination:

- Please do not arrive **more than 5-10 minutes before your appointment time.** Because if you do, people have to queue for longer and social distancing becomes more difficult.
- Have your **NHS Number** or invitation letter with you. Your NHS number appears on various NHS documents and letters you may have received related to your healthcare or medications. Please avoid calling your GP to ask for your NHS number as their telephone lines are incredibly busy and should be kept clear for patients who need to make appointments.
- If you are on **anticoagulation medication** (blood thinning medicine such as warfarin) please take your 'yellow book' with you to your vaccination appointment. You will be able to receive the vaccine if you are up to date with your scheduled INR testing and your last result was below the upper limit of your target INR range.
- Please wear practical clothing so it's easy to access your upper arm. Wearing a short sleeve t-shirt as your bottom layer of clothing is recommended. But please do wrap up warm with several layers and a coat to protect you from the cold weather before and after your vaccine.
- If you are nervous or don't like needles, let the person giving you your vaccine know so they can support you.
- Remember to wear a face-covering while travelling to, from and during your appointment and maintain social distancing at all times. You should also wash or sanitise your hands before and afterwards.
- Please be respectful of our staff. They are working long hours, evenings and weekends to get people vaccinated. Verbal or physical abuse of NHS staff or volunteers will not be tolerated and police officers are supporting our vaccination sites to keep everyone safe.

4) Emails and texts that claim to be from the NHS but are not

Some people are receiving texts and emails about the vaccination programme that look like they have come from the NHS but are in fact **scams**. To protect yourself:

- **Do not open any attachments or click any links within the email** unless you are sure it is legitimate. This is how scammers can damage your computer or access your personal information.
- If you receive an email that claims to be from the NHS vaccination programme and asks you for bank details or payment information, it **is a scam**. **Do not give your bank details or any payment information to anyone online unless you are sure who they are. The vaccine provided by the NHS is free to eligible patients and you don't need to pay for it.**

5) Information about the first and second doses

Both of the vaccines being given to patients (Oxford AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech) require two doses in order to provide their full protection – usually around 12 weeks apart. You must attend **both** appointments to make sure you have the most protection possible against COVID-19.

You won't get the full protection of the vaccine until around three weeks after your second dose. Even then, you may still be at risk of carrying the virus and passing it on to others. **Therefore, even after you have had the vaccine it's really important that you continue to follow the guidelines, wash your hands, cover your face and keep your distance from people.**



More information about the vaccination programme in Norfolk and Waveney can be found on our website here: **www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination-programme**.

This web page includes answers to the questions that people have told us are important ('Addressing Your Concerns') and a copy of this letter - so you can see that it is genuine and has come from NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group. Our website provides audio and translation functions, and we are also producing this information in an easy read format to access online.

Finally, we know there is a lot of information here, but we want patients to know what to expect from the vaccination programme and how to get protected from COVID-19 as quickly as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and your continued support of the NHS.

NHS Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group

www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk