

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 (North Suffolk). 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 have made a great start.

We know that some people in priority groups for vaccination are still waiting for their appointment, and 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.

Please do not contact your GP – you will get an appointment for a vaccine, it will just take a few weeks before we are able to contact everyone. 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.

This letter covers:

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

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 February 2021, these priority groups are:**

- those aged 80 years and over
- those aged over 75 years
- those aged over 70 years
- anyone living in a care home for older adults (aged 65+)
- care home staff (over 65s)
- frontline health care workers
- frontline social care workers
- adults on the NHS shielded patient list / clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV)

Vaccination is 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.

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.

If you are not currently included in the list of eligible groups 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.

2) Where you will get your vaccinations

There are currently 29 sites vaccinating patients in priority groups (see above) across Norfolk and Waveney (North Suffolk):

- 21 GP-led vaccination sites
- Three hospital vaccination hubs: the Norfolk and Norwich, James Paget and Queen Elizabeth hospitals (additional hospital sites are vaccinating health and care staff)
- Large scale vaccination centres include Castle Quarter in Norwich, Kings Lynn Corn Exchange, Connaught Hall in Attleborough and North Walsham Community Centre.
- 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.

More vaccination sites are due to go live in the coming weeks so people in Norfolk and Waveney (North Suffolk) shouldn't have to travel more than 10 miles to get a vaccine. New sites 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.

- Look at the email address - rather than the name of the sender displayed - to see if it is from a reliable source. You can use an online search engine to search for the sender's email address if you are unsure.
- Look for obvious spelling mistakes or poor use of language / grammar – for example just 'NHS is contacting you' rather than 'The NHS is contacting you'.

5) Information about the first and second doses

Both of the vaccines being given to patients (Oxford AstraZeneca and Pfizer) 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 (our myth buster) 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