

Sheffield community vaccination update

20 January 2021

What's been happening in Sheffield this week?

GP practices have been working hard in their primary care networks (PCNs) and have now vaccinated the vast majority of people aged over 80 and care homes in the city with their first dose.

This means, in line with national priorities, once networks have vaccinated their over 80s and care homes, they can now vaccinate the third and fourth priority groups – over 70s and extremely clinically vulnerable (those have been advised to shield).

All 15 PCNs in the city now have vaccination centres open and will be in touch with people when it's their turn to have the jab. Our plan, as supplies allow, is to have offered vaccines to the most vulnerable people, those in the top four groups, by the middle of February.

People are really keen to be vaccinated against this awful virus. Please don't contact a GP or hospital asking when you or a loved one will be vaccinated or just turn up. They will contact people when they have supply and you are eligible.

Large-scale vaccination site opening soon

As part of the national vaccination programme, you may be aware that there will be large-scale vaccination centres opening across the country. The plan is to open one at Sheffield Arena in the coming weeks.

The centre, run by Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, will be in addition to what is being delivered locally by GP practices, so people should not worry they will be expected to travel to the centre if they live far from it.

Vaccines will be by appointment only. The invitations to the large-scale centres are being sent out nationally via a national booking system to people in the eligible priority group (currently the over 70s) and who live within a 45 mile drive of a large scale centre.

The letter includes a website address and a free telephone number to book an appointment at the large scale centres. The letter does however also make it clear that those who have already been contacted by a GP practice to arrange to have their vaccine at a primary care centre don't need to take further action and can ignore the letter.

Frequently asked questions

GPs and community groups are sharing that 3 or 4 common questions that are being asked.

Please find answers to these questions below.

Is the vaccine safe?

We know some people are concerned about the safety of the two covid vaccines.

As with any medicine, vaccines are highly regulated. There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process, and continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

No safety concerns have been seen in clinical studies of tens of thousands of people across the globe. They were tested on both men and women, on people from different ethnic backgrounds, and of all ages between 18-84.

Vaccines are designed to prevent people from getting serious infectious diseases.

Vaccines prevented at least 10 million deaths between 2010 and 2015, and many millions more lives were protected from illness.

In fact, it is much safer for your immune system to learn how to fight illnesses through vaccination than by catching the virus and treating it.

Does the vaccine lead to infertility?

There's no scientific basis to the fertility rumour and no safety concerns have been reported in clinical trials with 50,000 people, thousands who were women in their reproductive years.

Vaccinations are common and safe. Did you know that most young women of childbearing age will have had 23 vaccinations by the age of 20 and there is no effect on fertility.

How was the Covid vaccine developed so fast?

Both vaccines have been developed rapidly without compromising on safety for a number of reasons. The biggest one is all the global funding invested to develop the vaccine, reducing the financial risk for pharmaceutical companies and ensuring no delays due to lack of funding.

Another reason is huge improvement in technology. Vaccine technology and the technological approaches to making vaccines are getting better and better, along with technology in our personal lives. Think how much technology in smart phones, TVs and smart speakers has transformed in the last 10 years. Technology in the pharmaceutical industry is benefiting from same advancements.

Can I return to normal once I've been vaccinated?

While there is light at the end of the tunnel, people still need to follow social distancing and lockdown rules. This is because we don't yet know whether the vaccine will stop people from catching and passing on the virus. We do expect it to reduce this risk of suffering from COVID-19 disease including hospitalisation and deaths.

With deaths and rates from covid being at a record high in the UK, people need to be careful and stay safe. It is against the law to meet socially with family or friends outside your household or bubble. This means people who have been vaccinated still cannot hug or spend time with anyone outside their household or bubble.

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

Yes, the Pfizer and Oxford vaccines do not contain any meat derivatives or porcine products.

The British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) has urged Muslims to take the vaccine on the advice of their medical practitioners and following informed consent. Read their position statements on the vaccines [here](#).

Translated materials published this week

Translated materials published by NHS England are now available in a dozen languages including Arabic, Chinese, and Farsi.

The materials [here](#) and [here](#).

The CCG will be printing leaflets and posters. If you would like some, please contact SHECCG.Comms@nhs.net with the number you'd like and for each language.

Other info

For the latest info, please visit these websites:

- NHS Sheffield CCG [FAQs](#), [videos](#), and [national leaflets](#)
- NHS Sheffield CCG press releases on vaccinations <https://www.sheffieldccg.nhs.uk/news.htm>
- Public Health England vaccine campaign materials <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/covid-19-vaccine/resources/>
- Government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-vaccination-programme>
- British Islam Medical Association position statement on the vaccine <https://britishima.org/pfizer-biontech-covid19-vaccine/>