

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS – JANUARY 2021 BY CLLR LORRAINE LINDSAY-GALE

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme update

Seven more local vaccination services, led by a GP-led Primary Care Network (PCN), will begin to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations next week. They will be located at:

- Clifton Hampden for patients registered with Clifton Hampden Surgery, Berinsfield Health Centre, Marcham Road Health Centre and Long Furlong Medical Practice.
- The Heritage Centre in Bicester for patients registered with any of the three Bicester practices.
- Kennington Health Centre for patients registered with Botley Medical Centre
- Didcot Civic Centre for patients registered with one of the three Didcot practices.
- Islip for patients registered with practices in Gosford Hill Medical Centre, Key Medical Practice, Islip Medical Practice, and Woodstock Surgery
- Cherwell School for patients registered with 19 Beaumont Street Surgery, Summertown Health Centre, Banbury Road Medical Practice and Luther Street Medical Centre
- Wantage Health Centre for patients registered with the two Wantage practices.

Those invited will be patients aged 80 and over. This is in line with the recommendation from the JCVI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) with the top two cohorts being the first priority for the vaccine:

1. Residents in care homes for older adults and their carers
2. All those 80 years of age or over and frontline health and social care workers

This week, vaccinations started to be provided at Morland House Surgery in Wheatley for patients in Thame, Wheatley, Watlington and Chalgrove which means we now have 11 sites that have started to vaccinate our most vulnerable residents. Several of the earlier sites to go live have had a further delivery of vaccinations and have started to visit care homes to vaccinate residents and staff. This has been possible as batches of vaccine can now be split and transported whilst maintaining the cold chain.

As previously stated, it is going to take some time to deliver the vaccine to all in the top two priority groups and GP practices are working through

their patient lists as fast as the deliveries allow. **Patients are being asked to wait until they are contacted by their GP practice.**

The practices with the largest number of patients over 80 and care home residents registered with them were in the earlier waves and all are still focussed on completing vaccinations for the highest two cohorts.

Three further sites are planning to go live in the second week of January and will be confirmed as soon as possible. This will complete the phased opening of local vaccination services through PCNs.

In addition to the local vaccination services being set up in local communities, the hospital vaccination hub in Oxford continues to focus on delivering vaccinations to front line health and care staff.

Plans are also underway for the Oxfordshire Vaccination Centre to be operational at the end of January which will be the site for mass vaccinations. This centre will focus on vaccinations for the wider population and is likely to be based at the Kassam Stadium.

The news this week that the AstraZeneca vaccine has been approved nationally is exciting and we have had confirmation that deliveries will be received this week (4th January) in Oxfordshire, increasing the number of patients that can be invited for vaccination.

A change was also made to the national guidance in relation to the timing of the second dose of the vaccine.

Following a review of clinical evidence and the latest public health data, the JCVI and the Department of Health and Social Care have published updated guidance for the NHS on the dose interval for the second dose of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine. It now recommends the second dose of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine should now be scheduled for after three weeks but before 12 weeks after the first dose, and that the second dose no longer needs to be held in storage.

The four UK Chief Medical Officers have therefore determined that:

“...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.”

They recognise that this will mean we need to reschedule second doses for most of our current first dose recipients, but for the reasons set out above by JCVI and CMOs, doing so should substantially improve

individual and population-level protection against COVID-19 over the next three months.

This means that most of those that have already received their first dose and have their second dose scheduled will now be contacted to rearrange their appointment for their second dose, allowing more first vaccinations to be booked over the coming weeks. As a system we are currently working through the logistics of undertaking this activity – so please be patient

It is extremely encouraging to see the enthusiasm for the vaccine and to have a sense of an end being in sight. We need to support our NHS colleagues as they work hard to deliver this programme at the same time as managing the demands of COVID infections and winter pressures.

It will still take several months for the whole population to be vaccinated and we can continue to provide support by asking people to be patient and to reassure them that they will be invited for a vaccination as soon as possible. Promoting the following messages to your residents will help to reassure patients and reduce the number of enquiries from individuals.

Schools Opening

Oxfordshire is now in Tier 4 with non-essential shops, pubs and restaurants having to close. However, it is still Government policy that our schools should remain open. Oxfordshire will follow the guidelines that Primary Schools will reopen on 4th January. Secondary Schools will operate a staggered opening, years 11 and 13 on 11th January with all pupils returning by 18th January. This will give staff time to establish mass testing for pupils and staff. Fortunately, we do not have the level of COVID-19 cases in the county that are being seen in London, that has caused schools there to be closed. Let's hope that we don't ever reach that point.