

Harpenden Health PCN COVID Vaccination update

This is the fourth newsletter in what will be a regular update from Harpenden Health Primary Care Network (HHPCN) on the mass COVID vaccination programme for our registered patients and local communities.

It is the definitive source for up-to-date factual information.

It will be posted on the three GP Practices websites, where all previous newsletters are easily accessible too. It will also be circulated by The Harpenden Trust

Update:

Harpenden Public Halls opened for COVID vaccinations on Wednesday 13th January 2021. Since then, regular COVID vaccination clinics have been running whenever we have had supplies of vaccine.

As soon as we are notified of the date of the next vaccine delivery, more patients will be contacted, and more appointments will be arranged.

Harpenden Public Halls COVID vaccination centre operates by appointment only. Please do not visit us unless you have an appointment as not only does this delay our work, it also increases our risk of catching COVID from an asymptomatic carrier.

We have vaccinated all registered patients in cohorts 1 to 4 who wanted vaccination.

If you are in cohort 1 to 4 and have not received your invitation for vaccination yet, or indeed have changed your mind and want to be vaccinated now, then please contact your Practice and ask for an appointment.

We have already invited people in cohort 5 for our next clinics booked on 18/2/2021 and 27/2/2021.

Harpenden Station has granted the HHPCN COVID Vaccination Clinic access to the car park on the same side as the ticket office. Parking options are as follows:



Where should I park for my vaccine appointment?"

1. Patient Drop Off Only (in front of Public Halls)
2. Patient/Carer Blue Badge Parking (car park at the rear of Public Halls)
3. Patient/Waiting to Pick Up Parking (station car park town side. Entry near to taxi rank)

Progress Report:

To date around 7300 vaccinations have been performed for HPCN registered patients. HPCN continues to follow the latest guidance issued by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) last updated on 6/1/2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020>

However, on the 15/2/2021 the Department of Health & Social Care issued information on an additional cohort of patients identified at increased risk from COVID-19, and the implications for their vaccination, support and advice. This is detailed below but is not included in the JCVI guidance above yet:

<https://primarycarepathways.co.uk/covid-19/national-guidelines-and-communications/england/595-c1099-letter-to-gps-on-risk-tool-sos-15th-feb/file>

HPCN will incorporate this guidance into the next round of invitations for vaccination we issue. This new group of patients will be added to the top of cohort 6 and contacted directly by the Government. This means some patients may receive two invitations for vaccination, one at Harpenden Halls and a second from the Government for a mass vaccination centre. Please see FAQ 5 below.

COVID vaccine supplies are limited and NHS England are using regional differences in vaccination rates achieved to date to allocate vaccine supplies on a weekly basis. This ensures that people in the highest priority groups have access to vaccine supplies. COVID vaccination rates for the over 80's in our area (Hertfordshire and West Essex STP) are the tenth highest of the 42 areas that England is divided in to. This means that already over 80% of over 80's as well as people in care homes have been vaccinated. We are awaiting further detailed breakdown of the figures.

NHS England vaccine distribution policy is based on the fact that nearly 90% of COVID deaths are in the groups due to get the jab by mid-February.

Second doses are due to be given around 11 weeks after the first dose and at the same place as the first dose. Currently the only group of people to receive second doses at 3-4 weeks are those about to start immunosuppressive therapy for the first time.

Patients will not have a choice of whether they receive the Pfizer or Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine as this depends on the delivery date and expiry date of the vaccines.

The only exception to this is on medical grounds.

We will continue to work down the priority groups in strict order.

Due to not knowing how many vaccines we will receive or when, it is not possible to tell you when you might expect to receive your vaccine invitation.

By now all health care professionals and social care workers should have received vaccination invitations through their professional bodies or employing organisation. This will be a link to make an appointment for a vaccination at Harpenden Memorial Hospital. In the meantime and if you are still having difficulties please phone 119 instead of your Practice.

Some Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1) Are all the three Harpenden GP Practices working together on this? *Yes*
- 2) How do I get an appointment? *If you have a Smartphone mobile number you will receive an invitation, which is an easy to use, automated booking system. If you do not, then your Practice will phone you. If you have a Smartphone mobile number but think your surgery may not know the number, please email them to update your details.*
- 3) Is it by appointment only? *Yes*

- 4) If I am concerned that I have been overlooked, should I telephone my GP Surgery? *No, please do not telephone the surgery regarding COVID vaccinations as this will block our telephone lines for patients making it difficult to get thorough about urgent and routine medical problems. Please email or write to the surgery, raising your concerns.*
- 5) I have received an NHS letter regarding the Stevenage Vaccination Centre. The GPs are at the Harpenden Public Halls. Where should I go? *If you do not want to wait to be invited to attend Harpenden Public Halls, please follow the guidance in the NHS letter about getting a vaccination from Stevenage. If you have an appointment already at Harpenden Public Halls, please attend that one.*
- 6) What Priority Group / cohort are you currently vaccinating? *Priority Two currently*
- 7) When will you start issuing appointments for the next priority cohort? *Priority Three already being invited.*
- 8) Can you remind me of the Priority Groups? *Please see previous newsletter. If you are currently working as a Health Care Provider or a Social Care Worker and have not received your invitation, please email your surgery with details of your job and inform them that you have not received an invitation. The most likely explanation is that the Practice does not know your occupation, so has not coded it and thus your priority is determined by your age and not your occupation.*
- 9) How can I find out when I will be invited? *HHPCN is working through the priority groups as quickly as we are delivered vaccines, please see progress report above.*
- 10) Can uninvited people, with no appointment, simply turn up at the end of the day? *Absolutely not, this puts our staff and volunteers at risk and delays the running of the clinic.*
- 11) Does the Harpenden Vaccination Centre have enough vaccines? *We invite only those we know we have the supply of vaccines for, which is why we are working under an appointment only model.*
- 12) Do you have both Pfizer and Astra-Zeneca? *This changes from week to week and is outside our control.*
- 13) Can I choose which vaccine I receive? *No, the Pfizer dose has to be used within 72 hours and will always be the default vaccine given. Any other approach potentially leads to vaccine wastage*
- 14) What time does the Vaccination Centre open? *Appointments currently run between 09.00 to 18.00 hours on the days we have vaccine supplies*
- 15) How early should I arrive for my appointment? *Please arrive at the entrance to Harpenden Public Halls no more than 5 minutes before your appointment time*
- 16) What if I have difficulties and arrive late? *If at all possible, you will still be seen provided we are open and still have vaccine supplies but please do arrive on time unless exceptional reasons. We cannot operate efficiently during the day if more than a few people are late*
- 17) How long are the queues? *We operate by appointment only, in order to avoid queues. From time to time queues will occur, under those circumstances elderly and frail will be prioritised so they are not left waiting outside.*
- 18) How can I help the Clinics run more efficiently? *If you are fit enough to walk here please do. Please arrive on time. There is free parking available at Harpenden Railway Station on the West Side (Taxi Rank) but for both vaccines you are not allowed to drive for at least 15 minutes. Depending on past medical history, some people will be able to leave straight after they have been vaccinated.*
- 19) What do I need to bring with me to my appointment? *Please bring some identification in case we need to confirm personal details. Also, if you are on Warfarin, please bring your latest INR result.*
- 20) Do I need my NHS number? *It would be helpful to have your NHS number, but not essential. You will find it on any NHS letter to you, on your repeat prescription details or on the NHS app if you have registered with it.*
- 21) Are there any car parking facilities? *Yes as detailed above and in Newsletter 2.*
- 22) Can I be dropped off right outside the Vaccination Centre at the Public Halls? *Yes, the road is closed for this purpose. Please drive up to and speak to the marshal on duty at the corner of Southdown Road and Arden Grove.*
- 23) Is the patient Entrance to the Public Halls the same as the patient Exit? *No, the exit is into the alley way on the left as you are looking at the Main Entrance.*

- 24) Where do I need to wait to pick someone up? *Please wait in the Harpenden Railway Station car park. If the person you are waiting for cannot phone you but you have a mobile telephone, please give the number to the Volunteer who assists the person you are dropping off in to the Main Halls. We will ask our volunteer to phone you to collect from near the entrance. Please come immediately as we have very limited waiting spaces.*
- 25) What happens in the Vaccination Centre? *On arrival you will be checked in at a table in the Main Hall, given a paper slip with your personal details which will be scanned by the Vaccinator who then administers your vaccine. Depending on your medical details and which vaccine you receive, you will either be able to leave immediately or have to wait up to 15 minutes. Our post vaccine waiting room is in Southdown Hall with chairs available.*
- 26) Is it safe? *Everyone has a temperature check on arrival and wearing of a mask is compulsory. All vaccinators working that day have had a recent Rapid Lateral Flow Test to exclude current COVID-19 infection before they start their shift.*
- 27) Is there social distancing in the Public Halls? *Yes*
- 28) Can my family member/my carer come with me? *Not unless absolutely necessary, we have plenty of volunteers and some wheel chairs to assist those who need it.*
- 29) Will I be given a date for my second appointment? *NHS England does not currently allow us to alley way on the left as you are looking at the Main Entrance issue appointments for the second vaccination yet. It will be due after 12 weeks and, at this stage, you will be invited in the same way as for your first appointment.*
- 30) Is there anything I can read to understand more about the Vaccines and the Vaccination process? *Please refer to previous newsletters, your GP Practice websites and www.gov.uk/coronavirus*
- 31) I am self-isolating. Should I still attend the Vaccination Centre? *Definitely not*
- 32) Can I have my vaccine if I have had a positive COVID swab? *Anyone who has had a positive swab in the last 28 days is excluded from being vaccinated, thereafter they can be vaccinated.*
- 33) What happens if I cannot make my appointment? *Please email your GP surgery asking them to make alternative arrangements.*
- 34) I am part of a government monitoring programme and have a swab monthly. Can I be vaccinated? *Yes*
- 34) I am part of a government monitoring programme and have a swab monthly. Can I be vaccinated? *Yes*
- 35) I have read that there may be 24 hour vaccination centres. Will Harpenden become a 24 hour centre? *No*
- 36) If I want to volunteer to help generally at the Harpenden Vaccination Centre, who should I contact? *The Harpenden Trust on vaccine@theharpendentrust.org.uk*

Thank you,

Dr David Hems, Dr Tania Goodwin and Dr Chas Thenuwara
Harpenden Health PCN (Primary Care Network)

Offering enhanced care and services to the patients of Davenport House Surgery, The Elms Medical Practice & The Village Surgery

For the latest Corona Virus Updates Please Follow the Links Below:

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[The Elms](#)

[The Village surgery](#)

[Newsletter 1](#)

[Newletter 2](#)

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