

## Update on fighting coronavirus in Buckinghamshire



Dear Resident,

There's a lot in the news about how the COVID-19 vaccination programme is ramping up across the country and I know from all the emails and telephone calls that I have received that a great many of you are understandably anxious for details of what's happening locally.

This is, of course, a massive logistical exercise, probably the biggest ever in peacetime. As I have stressed repeatedly in these newsletters, the rollout of the vaccination programme is the responsibility of the NHS, not Buckinghamshire Council. The NHS determines where, when and to whom the vaccine is given both locally and nationally. Nevertheless, I am committed to providing everyone with as much news as possible on this essential programme. I'm therefore really pleased to be in a position today where I can provide you with more information on the vaccination programme in Buckinghamshire.

There are a number of different ways you could be vaccinated:

1. At a local vaccination site run by Buckinghamshire GPs
2. At a pharmacy site, organised nationally by the NHS
3. At a national vaccination site, organised nationally by the NHS
4. At a hospital if you're a health or social care worker

GPs are also responsible for delivering the vaccine directly to care homes for residents and staff.

### **GP-led vaccine sites**

GP surgeries across the county have come together to form **nine GP-led vaccination sites** in Bucks. This means that when it's your turn, you'll be invited for a COVID-19 vaccine by your own surgery, but will go to one of these nine sites chosen by your GP to receive it. **The aim is that all residents over the age of 80 will have been offered a vaccination appointment through their GP by the end of January.**

Five of these GP-led sites are already open in:

- Chalfont St Peter
- Winslow
- Princes Risborough
- High Wycombe
- Chesham

GP-led sites in Aylesbury and High Wycombe will start this week and two further sites are also expected to go live shortly.

**Over 12,000 people in Buckinghamshire have already been vaccinated.**

### **Pharmacy-led vaccine sites**

A number of pharmacy vaccination sites will also be launched in Buckinghamshire; sites in Marlow and Wycombe are due to open and start vaccinating people during next week. Additional sites in other areas of the county are due to open very soon too. Patients will have a choice of attending either a GP-led site or a pharmacy-led site if that is more convenient.

### **National vaccination sites**

In addition to the local GP and pharmacy-led sites, the NHS has opened the first wave of mass vaccination centres in England. The three closest to Buckinghamshire are:

- Epsom Racecourse in Surrey
- The Excel Centre in London
- Robertson House in Stevenage

Letters from the NHS began arriving this weekend to people aged 80 or over who live a 30-45 minute drive from a national site, including some residents who live in Buckinghamshire. The letter explains that you can book a slot at one of the national sites over the phone or online via the national booking service.

Any residents who've had this letter can choose to book through the national system if they wish to; however, as I've already mentioned, all patients over the age of 80 will be offered an appointment locally by the end of January. **If you choose not to go for an appointment at a national site, it will not affect your ability to get an appointment at a local site through your GP.**

We are aiming to have two mass vaccination sites in Buckinghamshire and you'll be able to book your vaccination through the national booking system when these sites go live; more information on these should be available in the coming week and I'll update you as soon as I'm able.

### **When will I get my vaccine?**

I know this is the main question for many of you and I'm sure a lot of you will already be aware of [the NHS priority list](#), i.e. who will be first in the queue for these vaccine appointments. For now, the focus is to get through the top two priority groups; those in care homes (residents and staff) people over 80 and health and social care workers. Once all these people have received their vaccine then the rest of the list will be worked through as quickly as possible.

It is inevitable, with some GP-led centres having opened ahead of others that you may know of someone of similar age who has received their vaccination ahead of you. As I've already underlined however, it remains the intention that everyone over 80 years will have been offered their vaccination by the end of January and **the aim is to deliver vaccinations for the top four priority groups by the middle of February.**

None of this can be achieved overnight and there will inevitably be some teething problems and some glitches as this rolls out, but I know so many of you have been very anxious for news about what's happening, so I wanted to keep you fully briefed on where we are with this in Buckinghamshire at the moment.

**Please do not call your GP direct about your vaccine and please wait to be contacted by the NHS. They will get in touch with you directly when it's your turn.** Please remember, lots of people calling their GPs unnecessarily may well prevent someone with an urgent, non-COVID condition from being able to get through to a doctor.

### **Stay at Home**

Being able to ramp up vaccinations here in Buckinghamshire is really positive news in the face of what is an extremely grave point in the pandemic. Sadly, **we expect the coming weeks to be the toughest yet.** The number of new cases has still continued to rise, and our local NHS services are under extreme pressure.

Please don't fall into the trap of thinking this is an illness that only effects the elderly and infirm. A quarter of all patients in hospital with COVID-19 are under the age of 60. This is a horrible disease that has the potential to impact us all and the very best thing we can all do is to **stay at home** unless it's necessary for one of the legally permitted reasons. [Here are the full details of the circumstances in which you can leave your home.](#)

You can see the latest Buckinghamshire data on our [COVID dashboard](#) and [local case numbers via the Government's website.](#)

I hope you feel reassured that there is a way out of the pandemic and that the pace of the vaccination programme is accelerating here. **You can keep up to date with the vaccination programme in Buckinghamshire [via the new vaccine programme pages on our website.](#)**

In the meantime, please, **follow the rules to the letter** to help get our lives back to normal and you keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

**Martin Tett**

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

To keep up to date with the latest news from Buckinghamshire Council, please follow us on social media:



Buckinghamshire Council  
The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF  
[buckinghamshire.gov.uk](http://buckinghamshire.gov.uk)