

## **Briefing for MPs**

### **COVID-19 Vaccination programme roll out – progress update**

**29 April 2021**

#### **At a glance:**

- As of Thursday 29 April, our vaccine teams have carried out 803,302 vaccinations (548,530 first dose vaccinations and 254,772 second dose jabs).
- This week, the government announced that people aged 42 and over would now be invited to book their appointments.
- These appointments are available for people through the National Booking Service as well as through some GPs. The system has launched a campaign aimed at encouraging younger cohorts of people to get their jab when invited to do so.
- Within our system, vaccine is available from community pharmacies, vaccination centres and Primary Care Network (PCN) led services. In addition, specialist clinics (supported by 'pop up' vaccination sites and the vaccination bus) ensure the vaccine is offered to all in a way that is right for them. COVID-19 vaccination is available in these settings to ensure greatest ease of access and convenience for local people.

#### **Highly performing system**

As of 26 April, the system was still the second highest performing system in the region with only 8.65% of the population cohorts 1-9 still awaiting vaccination. The weekly statistics from NHS England have placed the system in the top quartile for performance since January.

#### **Vaccine supply**

The current reduction in supply of vaccine is a national issue. As stated by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health, supply of vaccine to the UK is lumpy resulting in some vaccination sites needing to fluctuate their opening hours aligned to supply. Since the beginning of April, first dose supply has been minimal. However, the system has adapted its delivery model to reflect for the temporary reduction in supply. This has included rescheduled or reduced appointments, vaccination sites operating reduced opening hours or being temporarily closed. The system is looking forward to receiving increases in its vaccine supply which, according to NHS England, will gradually increase from w/c 10 May.

We are committed to ensuring the supply we do have is distributed in an equitable way across our vaccination centres so that it is best aligned to eligible patients. This is to ensure ease of access to marginalised and vulnerable groups. The system will

open additional vaccination sites which will include local community pharmacies and large vaccination centres as more vaccine becomes available.

We are aware of increased frustration among some local people who have complained that they have to wait longer for first doses. Likewise, a small number of people have contacted the system to ask when they will receive their second dose. We will continue to issue communications through social media, the media and through our website that if people have not heard by week 11, that they should get in touch with the NHS. Everyone who is eligible for a second dose vaccination will receive one if they choose. We are committed to making sure no one gets left behind and we regularly monitor uptake

We have also heard some people are having to travel further afield to get their vaccine as a small number of system vaccination sites appear as options on the national booking system – some have been invited to sites in Kent. At the moment, we are having to prioritise those individuals who need their second dose vaccination within the 12-week window. However we are asking people at this time to not contact their GP practice but instead to look at the sneevaccine website ([www.sneevaccine.org.uk](http://www.sneevaccine.org.uk)) for further information.

### **Second dose appointments**

Ensuring all patients are offered a second dose vaccine within 12 weeks is being actively managed and is subject to robust weekly scrutiny from NHS England. Patients are invited to book a second dose appointment at the place where they had their first dose. Where they do not, local primary care networks are contacting the patient directly and offering an appointment. Should a patient choose not to accept the invitation, the vaccine will be offered to others who are eligible (either as first or second dose appointments) to avoid wastage. If, at a later date, the patient seeks a second dose appointment, they will be offered availability based upon the supply of vaccine.

The importance of taking up the second dose appointment when invited is reinforced in communications and we are using milestones in the calendar to assist us. For example, we are prompting people that if they have had their first vaccination on or before Valentine's Day, to come forward to book their second if they have not already received an invitation.

There is information available and an infographic about the process for booking second dose appointments on the sneevaccine website.

### **Vaccination bus**

Our mobile vaccination service continues to make great progress. Clinicians on the bus have been travelling to immunise people in areas where vaccine uptake has been lower than in other parts of the region. Minority ethnic communities, those with certain disabilities and others who are vulnerable due to poor access to static vaccination sites have all benefited to date from the programme.

## **Communications and engagement**

The system continues to progress its communications and engagement activities. We have held virtual events, which were lived streamed through the sneevaccine website, to answer concerns and queries about its roll out of the vaccination programme across Suffolk and north east Essex. The most recent event held was last Friday which was hosted by the system and our partners at the Suffolk and North East Essex Maternity Voices Partnership. A panel of experts were on hand to answer live questions and to provide reassurance about the vaccine. Similar events were held for county, district and parish councillors, seldom heard groups, wider communities and the media.

Additional activities have been undertaken:

- COVID-19 Communications Strategy has been refreshed to focus on targeting younger cohorts of people (JCVI Priority Groups 10-12)
  - Looking at creating videos with local professional footballers
  - Working with local universities, colleges and schools to help share messages
  - Taking out paid for advertising through social media channels (Facebook)
  - Working with a sea shanty group to share messages through song to younger cohorts
- Communicated supply issues with updated FAQs on the website
- Videos produced with our Prevention Lead to discuss common side effects about the vaccination
- Creating supportive comms to those who are nervous about injections
- Weekly ICS briefings continue to be produced
- Continuous flow of stories that have appeared in the local and regional media
- Our sneevaccine website attracts approximately 3,500 visitors each week. This site is a one stop shop for information about the vaccination roll out with a link to local support groups and organisations.

## **Seeking public views**

The system actively monitors patient experience. We have found more people have responded to second dose survey than first dose survey. There is no significant feedback coming through on either the survey or through our community conversation re second dose which identifies lack of second dose appointments or breach of the 12-week window as a trend. Individual cases are promptly managed. Comments from the public guides our communications strategy so that concerns from the public are addressed.

## **Volume of complaints**

We are vaccinating on average circa 60,000 per week. The average number of complaints we receive is about 20 each week.

**Ends**