

Ensuring all eligible people have the opportunity to be vaccinated

Summary

In just two months, the health service has vaccinated more than 10 million people, visited 10,000 care homes and issued over six million invitations from the National Booking Service.

The last invites to those aged 70 and over on the Shielded Patients List who are yet to be vaccinated have now either been delivered or are due to arrive this week (w/c 8th Feb), meaning vaccines have been offered to everyone eligible whose contact details the NHS has.

To ensure that nobody is left behind, the NHS is now asking people in this group who have not had their first dose yet to come forward now and make an appointment.

How this will work

Anyone aged 70 and over or on the Shielded Patients List (because they are clinically extremely vulnerable) will be able to use the National Booking System to book an appointment without needing a letter, provided they are registered with a GP (so that records can be matched). Members of the public not in these groups will still need to wait to be contacted.

The National Immunisations Management Service is also making follow up phone calls and sending reminder letters to people to offer help and advice on booking an appointment. Follow up text messages are also planned where we have people's mobile phone number.

GP services will also be following up this week with any of their patients in this group they are yet to vaccinate, particularly those on the Shielded Patients List. They will also be working to ensure housebound patients are protected before the end of the week, with additional funding of £10 per patient being provided to help them do this.

What this means for the public

People will be encouraged to arrange an appointment at a Vaccination Centre or community pharmacy-led service by visiting www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination, where they can choose a time slot and location that suits them.

People should try to use the website where possible. For those who can't, they can call 119 free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm seven days a week. The phone line can get very busy, so people may choose to ring later in the day when it is less busy. British Sign Language, text relay and interpreter services are available.

People over aged 70 and over or on the Shielded Patient List can also choose to wait to be invited by a local GP-led service, or contact them directly if they haven't heard anything – which may be because they are not currently registered. We would encourage anyone who isn't already to register with a GP; no proof of address or immigration status is needed.

What this means for frontline health and social care workers and care home residents

Action is underway to continue to offer vaccines to every eligible health and social care worker. This is being led by employers, including local authorities and NHS organisations.

By the end of January NHS teams had visited all of the care homes they were able to. Visits will continue to homes which had outbreaks when it is safe to do so, and repeat visits are also underway to homes to ensure residents and staff who were elsewhere or ill at the time of the first visit can receive their first dose too.

Q&As

Does this mean people can turn up at vaccination services without an appointment?

No. People will still need to make an appointment in advance before going to any vaccination service. This is important because booking slots are carefully managed to allow for social distancing and the number of appointments is based on the supply available that day.

Do I need to know my NHS number to use the booking website/phone line?

No. It's easier if you do have your NHS number, but if you don't both the NHS booking website and phone line can still book appointments using other details, provided you are registered with a GP practice.

You can find your NHS number on the NHS App or at www.nhs.uk/find-nhs-number

If I've already had my first dose will I be able to book my second in this way?

No. You will only be able to book if our records show you have yet to have your first dose. If you have already had your first dose, please wait for the NHS to contact you about your second.

What if I don't live close to one of the large Vaccination Centres?

The National Booking Service also handles booking for pharmacy-led vaccination services, of which there are around 200 across the country. Only a small number of people don't live within travelling distance of at least one of these services.

Alternatively, you can also choose to wait to be contacted by your local GP services. If they haven't been in contact already, this will be soon.

Does the NHS have the capacity and supplies available if lots of people now book?

The vast majority of people in these groups have already either had their first dose or are booked in to be vaccinated shortly.

The NHS is confident that the supplies and booking slots are available to accommodate the expected number of people who may now come forward.

Why have I not been contacted by anyone about a vaccination?

If you are 70 or over or on the Shielded Patient List, then you it is likely that you have been contacted by the NHS already.. If you haven't, this could be for a number of reasons, but is most likely to be because you are not registered with a GP or have recently moved, and we therefore don't have your contact details.

If you have never registered with a GP or haven't been to a GP for a number of years, we would recommend speaking with your local practice about registering.

As well as getting access to Covid-19 vaccines, being registered with a GP also means you are invited to important health checks such as for cancer or heart disease, and can access care easier when you need it.

More information on registering with a GP is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>

Will this approach also apply to the next priority groups when it is their turn to be vaccinated?

No. For the moment this only applies to people aged 70 and over and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

When the time comes to start vaccinating other priority groups, this will be by invitation only so that we can manage the supplies of vaccines available in the fairest possible way.

How do I get an NHS number?

You may already have an NHS number but just don't know it. If you don't know your NHS number, you can find out if you have one and what it is at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-number>

If you don't have an NHS number this is likely to be because you are not registered with a GP. If this is the case, we would recommend speaking with your local practice about registering.

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What if I book an appointment through the NHS website or 119 and I need to rearrange it?

If you need to rearrange an appointment that you booked through the NHS website, you can do this through the 'manage your appointments' section on the booking page.

If you booked through 119, you can also ring to rearrange your appointment.

If you can't attend your appointment for any reason, please cancel or rearrange it so that the appointment slot can be given to someone else who needs it.

Can I still book if I previously had an appointment but didn't attend or cancel it?

Yes. Only those who have had a vaccination recorded are marked on our system and are therefore unable to book again.

A letter came to my home but it was for someone else. Can I still use it to book an appointment?

No. Unless you are aged 70 or over or on the Shielded Patients List you will not be able to book an appointment.

If you receive a letter for someone who does not live at your address anymore, please return to sender in the usual way so that our records can be updated.