

## Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the most common questions and answers gathered across the whole of the Humber region, to help you with any queries or concerns you have around the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Is the NHS confident the vaccines are safe?**

Yes. The NHS will not offer any Covid-19 vaccinations to the public until independent experts have signed off that it is safe to do so.

The MHRA, the official UK regulator, have said that both of these vaccines have good safety profiles and offer a high level of protection, and we have full confidence in their expert judgement and processes. As with any medicine, vaccines are highly regulated products.

There are checks at every stage in the development and manufacturing process, and continued monitoring once it has been authorised and is being used in the wider population.

### **Are there any side effects?**

These are important details which the MHRA always consider when assessing candidate vaccines for use.

For these vaccines, like lots of others, they have identified that some people might feel slightly unwell, but they report that no significant side effects have been observed in the tens of thousands of people involved in trials.

All patients will be provided with information on the vaccine they have received, how to look out for any side effects, and what to do if they do occur, including reporting them to the MHRA.

More information on possible side effects can be found at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine).

### **Why is the NHS postponing second doses?**

The [UK Chief Medical Officers](#) have agreed a longer timeframe between first and second doses so that more people can get their first dose quickly, and because the evidence shows that one dose still offers a high level of protection after two weeks – 89% for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 74% for the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

This decision will allow the NHS to get the maximum benefit for the most people in the shortest possible time and will help save lives.

Getting both doses remains important so the NHS would urge people to return for it at the right time.

### **Can people pick what vaccine they want?**

No. Any vaccines that the NHS will provide will have been approved because they pass the MHRA's tests on safety and efficacy, so people should be assured that whatever vaccine they get, it is worth their while.

### **How is the NHS ensuring that the vaccine won't be wasted?**

The NHS plans are based around ensuring that waste is minimised. For example, this includes grouping vaccinations in one GP practice or high-volume sites on behalf of a few Primary Care Networks or GP surgeries, and ensuring that the numbers of people each facility is able to see is in line with the stock they receive.

To help us avoid any vaccine going to waste, we would encourage everybody who is invited by the NHS to do everything they can to attend their appointment at the vaccination site they are offered. At times, where necessary and to minimise Pfizer / BioNTech vaccine wastage, people in the next JCVI priority patient cohorts may also be offered a vaccination at short notice.

## **Vaccine priority**

### **Who gets the vaccine first?**

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published its detailed advice here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020)

In line with this guidance, in this initial phase vaccines will be prioritised for those 80 years of age and over, those who live and work in care home, and frontline health and social care staff.

The NHS ambition, if supplies allow, is to have offered vaccines to the most vulnerable people in Humber Coast and Vale area by the middle of February.

### **My family member is over 70 but they haven't been yet contacted about the vaccine?**

We appreciate that many people are eager to have a vaccination and in the Humber, Coast and Vale region we are working hard to vaccinate people as quickly as we can in line with the JCVI prioritisation. The NHS is inviting eligible people in a phased basis as supplies of the vaccine allow.

Everyone in our area will be offered a vaccination, however the whole programme of work will take some time to complete due to its scale and complexity. If someone who is eligible has not received an invitation yet, it is likely that they will be invited soon. As more local vaccination services go live (including large vaccination centres), the NHS will invite more people to come forward.

**If a household has a priority group member, such as an NHS frontline worker or vulnerable person, will everyone living in that household be vaccinated together?**

These decisions are for the JCVI. Their current prioritisation plan does not include household members of NHS staff or clinically vulnerable people automatically – although in some cases family members may be eligible in their own right.

**Vaccine services locations and progress so far**

**Where are vaccination sites in my local area?**

- **East Riding of Yorkshire:** Brough Surgery, Church View Surgery, Bartholomew Medical Practice, Alfred Bean Hospital, Beverley Race Course, Humber Trust Headquarters and Medical Centre Bridlington - Practice 3
- **Hull:** KCOM Stadium, Alf Marshall Community Centre, Diadem Medical Practice, East Hull Family Practice and Kingswood Medical Centre
- **North East Lincolnshire:** Beacon Medical, Pilgrim Primary Care Centre, Scartho Medical Centre, Open Door
- **North Lincolnshire:** Cedar Medical Practice, Riverside Surgery, South Axholme Practice and The Central Surgery Barton
- **North Yorkshire:** Central Healthcare (Lawrence House), Derwent Practice, Filey Surgery, The Forum (Northallerton), Tennants Auction House (Layburn), The Pavillion (Harrogate) and Whitby Pavillion
- **Vale of York:** Haxby Health Centre, Pickering Medical Practice, Posterngate Surgery, Tadcaster Health Centre and Askham Bar Park and Ride

You do not need to contact your local GP to ask for the vaccine. They will let you know when it's your turn.

**How were these local vaccination sites chosen?**

GP Practices are working together through their Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and each PCN has one designated site that has been approved by NHS England for

administering the vaccination for patients across all of their practices. We would encourage everybody who is contacted by their local GP practice, and is able to do so, to attend the vaccination centre they are offered. However, we acknowledge that, for some patients, travelling to some centres is more difficult than for others and a small number of patients may therefore be offered a vaccination at their local GP practice when it is clinically safe and possible to do so, although patients may have to wait for supply of the right type of vaccine.

### **Where are the hospital hub sites?**

- Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Humber NHS Teaching Foundation Trust
- Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
- York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

You might be contacted to have the vaccination at a hospital hub as an inpatient or outpatient. If you have had your first jab, you will be contacted about getting your second.

### **Where are the nearest large vaccination sites?**

- Askham Bar Park and Ride in York

### **Where are the nearest pharmacy hubs?**

- Ancora Healthcare Limited in Scunthorpe

This list is correct as of 29 January 2021. The information on local vaccination services and hospital hubs is published and regularly updated on the NHS England website [www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/vaccination-sites/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/vaccination-sites/)

### **Why have I received a letter inviting me to a large vaccination centre when there is a local site near me?**

People who are eligible and haven't already been vaccinated may receive a letter to book an appointment in a large vaccination centre – either online or by phone. If you can't travel to one of these, or there is another reason you can't book an appointment, you can choose to wait until the local GP service contacts you. The number of locations will increase over the coming months.

### **How will I be invited to have my vaccine**

Currently those people in the priority groups 1-4 are being contacted by the NHS in a range of ways to book an appointment.

- People may receive a letter from the National NHS Vaccination Booking Service offering them to book their vaccine with the national system at a nearby vaccination centre or a community pharmacy. If you have not already got an appointment elsewhere, you can book in this way. This however does not exclude you from the local general practice/Primary Care Network (PCN) invitations for vaccination.
- If you are unable to travel to one of the locations offered by the national letter or cannot book this way, then you can choose to wait until the local GP/PCN service contacts you. They will contact people in the eligible groups separately and invite them to book an appointment under the local booking system.
- People in the priority groups 1-4 do not need to contact their GP as they will be contacted when it's their turn. If you are in one of these groups you will be contacted by phone by either your own practice or somebody working on their behalf.
- If you receive a letter from the NHS to book with the national system and you ***already have an appointment booked with the local GP service then please ignore the letter and keep your existing appointment.***

### **What is the progress so far, how many people have been vaccinated in our area?**

The latest figures and data on the national and local progress of the vaccination programme is published daily but the NHS England on their website [Statistics » COVID-19 Vaccinations \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

### **I'm worried about attending a vaccination appointment and having to queue with lots of people. How are you maintaining social distancing?**

Our covid-19 vaccination programme is well underway and we know people are eager to get to their appointment. However, in order for us to maintain social distancing, space on some of our sites is more limited than normal. We are keeping to time but some people are arriving early for their appointment and unfortunately, in some cases, have to wait outside, which is something we wish to avoid. Please help us keep you safe and warm by arriving on time for your appointment, not early.

## **Is it true that vaccines supplies in the North East and Yorkshire region might be reduced?**

This is an NHS England decision. To ensure all of those people in the top priority groups can get vaccinated quickly, targeted deliveries are being made to areas where there are more people left to vaccinate in the priority cohorts.

While deliveries of the vaccine to local sites will vary in line with available supply, crucially each region of the country is getting a fair share of doses for them to get priority groups of people vaccinated, as advised by the JCVI. Because communities vary hugely in size and demographics, areas yet to vaccinate the most at-risk groups of people are being targeted with the doses they now need, to get priority cohorts protected.

## **Vaccine ingredients and specifics**

### **Does the vaccine include any parts from foetal or animal origin?**

No. There is no material of foetal or animal origin in either vaccine. All ingredients are published in healthcare information on the MHRA's website.

For the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-for-covid-19>

For the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-approval-of-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>

The Muslim Council of Britain has also circulated [BIMA's position statement](#) on the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, which states they contain no animal products or human embryo cells

### **Is the vaccine halal?**

The British Islamic Medical Association have produced a helpful guide for the Muslim community which can be found at <https://britishima.org/pfizer-biontech-covid19-vaccine>. There are no animal products in either of the vaccines.

### **Is the vaccine vegan?**

There are no animal products in either of the vaccines. The laws and regulatory agencies worldwide currently require that new drugs and treatments are tested on animals before clinical trials on humans. The Vegan Society issued a statement on the COVID-19 vaccine which can be read in full by going to [www.vegansociety.com/news/news/vegan-society-response-covid-19-vaccine](http://www.vegansociety.com/news/news/vegan-society-response-covid-19-vaccine)

An extract from the statement reads: "[The definition of veganism](#) recognises that it is not always possible or practicable to avoid animal use, which is particularly relevant to medical situations. In the case of Covid-19, vaccination will play a fundamental role in tackling the pandemic and saving lives. As all vaccines currently are tested on animals, at this stage it is impossible to have a vaccine that has been created without animal use."

### **Can the vaccine alter your genetic material?**

There is no evidence to suggest that individual genetic material will undergo an alteration after receiving the vaccine.

### **I have allergies, can I have the vaccine?**

COVID vaccines are safe and effective for the vast majority of people – they have been tested on tens of thousands of people and assessed by experts.

Any person with a history of immediate-onset anaphylaxis to the ingredients contained in the vaccines should not receive them.

Checking for allergies is a routine part of the process before giving any vaccine or new medicine. Having these conversations – as well as being able to deal with allergic reactions in the rare case they do happen, is a central part of training for vaccinators. Please speak to the vaccinating clinician about any of your concerns.

### **Does the vaccine work on those taking immune suppressants?**

Although the vaccine was not tested on those with very serious immunological conditions, the vaccine has been proven to be very effective and it is unlikely that the vaccine will have no effect at all on these individuals.

There may be a very small number of people with very complex or severe immunological problems who can't make any response at all – but the vaccine should not do any harm to these individuals. Individuals meeting these criteria may want to discuss the vaccine further with their specialist doctor.

### **I am pregnant/planning to have a baby. Should I get the vaccine?**

The MHRA have updated their guidance to say that pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding can have the vaccine but should discuss it with a clinician to ensure that the benefits outweigh any potential risks.

[You can read more about advice for people of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding on the gov.uk website.](#)

### **Should I be worried about the impact of Covid-19 vaccines on fertility?**

No. Both the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives are reassuring women that there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 vaccines will affect fertility. Women who are eligible for the vaccination should discuss any concerns with a clinician. [You can read more about this on the Royal College website.](#)

### **Travel to vaccination sites**

#### **I am housebound. How can I get my vaccine?**

We are planning a mixed approach in Humber Coast and Vale area to ensure that people who are eligible can get the vaccine safely. For care home residents and housebound people, this will involve roving community teams coming to them. These will be introduced as the vaccination programme progresses.

#### **I have received a letter to have my vaccine at a vaccination centre but I'd struggle to travel there. Can I have my vaccine somewhere closer to home?**

If you'd struggle to get to a large vaccination centre you can wait until more vaccination centres, closer to where you live, become available. Alternatively, you still have an option to have your vaccine arranged through your local GP practice network. They will contact you about it separately. You do not need to contact your local GP to ask for the vaccine. They will let you know when it's your turn.

The NHS will follow up with people that haven't booked their appointment, as a reminder.

If you receive a letter from the NHS to book with the national system and you already have an appointment booked with the local GP service then please ignore the letter and keep your existing appointment.



## **Where and when will I receive my second dose?**

The first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine should give you good protection from coronavirus. But you need to have the 2 doses of the vaccine to give you longer lasting protection. You will have the second dose 3 to 12 weeks after having the first dose. You will be offered an appointment to have your second vaccine dose at the same location you received your first dose.

## **Health and social care worker vaccination programme**

### **Why are healthcare workers amongst the first groups to receive the vaccine?**

The JCVI have put patient-facing health and social care staff into a priority group because of their heightened risk of exposure to the virus. Employers have been asked to offer the vaccine to the most at risk healthcare workers first. With many more doses now expected over the coming weeks, employers will be widening this out and protecting staff as soon as possible.

The NHS is experienced in vaccinating staff quickly and safely. The Humber, Coast and Vale vaccination programme office is working with local NHS and health and social care employers to offer all eligible staff the opportunity to take it up over the coming weeks and months.

### **Who is included in the health and social care cohort?**

The health and social care cohort includes:

- Staff employed by the NHS
- Social care staff employed by local authority
- Third sector/private organisations
- Privately employed individuals
- Private contractors/individual practitioners
- Large national/regional organisations
- Funeral operatives

More information with a full list of this cohort is available from the [Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a) [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a)

## **I'm a healthcare and/or social worker why haven't I been contacted about my vaccine yet?**

While the NHS in Humber, Coast and Vale is committed to ensuring that all of the health and social care workforce receive their vaccination, a programme of this size will take time, considering the number of provider organisations and individual practitioners.

We are working to capture all eligible organisations in Humber Coast and Vale and offer them vaccines in hospital hubs, GP practices or via vaccination centres. This will include social care staff, services commissioned by the local authority, primary care contractors, services commissioned by Clinical Commissioning Groups, independent contractors, single practitioners, locums, directly employed personal assistants, other groups providing direct care, funeral directors and other [groups identified in the Green Book](#).

Please note that we estimate that this cohort includes over 100,000 individuals across thousands of organisations in our area, so we would ask you to remain patient while we're working through large numbers of eligible professionals. Your employer will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine.

Independently self-employed individuals who fit the JCVI criteria for health and social care staff, can email our programme office at [eryccgc-19.vaccinationprogram@nhs.net](mailto:eryccgc-19.vaccinationprogram@nhs.net) and they will be contacted in the near future.