

Sussex NHS Commissioners COVID-19 Community Briefing

29 January 2021

This briefing will be produced fortnightly, to bring you the latest information from Sussex Health and Care services about the support available for you during Covid-19.

Sussex COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The Brighton Centre Vaccination Site is now live!

Patients across Sussex have started to receive their COVID-19 vaccination at the Brighton Centre.

This week's launch of the vaccination site at the Brighton Centre is the latest step in the roll-out of the Sussex vaccination programme to enable the NHS to protect even more people in the coming weeks.

Those in the initial priority groups are being invited to book an appointment via the national booking system. Patients will be welcomed by the teams from Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust.

The purpose of the vaccination site in Brighton is not just to increase the numbers of people the NHS can vaccinate, but to give those eligible for vaccination a choice of ways of receiving their vaccine.

Anyone receiving a letter from the national booking service can choose whether to book an appointment at a vaccination centre – where they will be looked after by teams from the Sussex

Community NHS Foundation Trust – or wait to be contacted by their GP for an appointment at their local GP-led vaccination service if that would be more convenient.

Read more about [What to expect when you arrive at the Brighton Centre for your appointment](#) including a [video](#) showing patients around, information in [Easy Read](#), and [other formats and languages](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination: national letters

Now that the Brighton Centre vac site and 3 local pharmacy services have gone live, the national booking system has started to send out invitation letter to book a vaccination appointment there. The letters are being sent to everyone in the eligible priority groups (cohorts 1-4) who appear on the national system as not having received the vaccine.

Please be aware that the national system can only book appointments at the larger vaccination centres and local pharmacy services, not the GP-led or local vaccination services.

If you receive a letter and decide you would prefer not to have it at the large site, and would rather receive the vaccine at your local GP-led service, please ignore the letter and just wait to be contacted by your GP - you do not have to take any more action. Do not contact your GP to book a vaccination.

We also want to make you aware that although the letter mentions “local GP services”, the national booking system is only for the larger vaccination sites and local pharmacy services. The national system cannot tell if a patient has a booked appointment with their GP-led or local vaccination service.

This is causing confusion and uncertainty amongst patients as the relationship between the national booking system and the GP led or local vaccination services is not clear.

Sussex Health and Care Partnership have put together a short [animation](#), to support patients to understand the different options available to them.

Travelling to Vaccination Appointments

For some patients, their local vaccination site may be within driving distance. For those who do not have access to a car, Government guidelines state that family and friends of elderly patients are still permitted to take them to their COVID-19 vaccine appointment under the exemption of ‘providing care for the vulnerable’.



If the patient does not have transport in place to attend their vaccination, arrangements will be made on their behalf.

We’re in the process of organising a range of transport options and will be informing you of these plans next week.

Please continue to look at our [COVID-19 Vaccination Programme FAQs](#) for up to date information.

Local Updates on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

East Sussex

Heathfield - From this week, Heathfield Surgery in the Wealden District will be starting to make appointments for their patients to receive the COVID-19 vaccination at their surgery. They will be contacting patients aged 75 and over and making appointments as deliveries of the vaccine are confirmed.

Hailsham - Vaccinations will be taking place in Hailsham again this weekend for patients from all three of the GP practices focused on those aged 80 and over. Patients will be contacted as soon as an appointment is available.

Etchingam - The local vaccination service at Etchingam **launched last week vaccinating** hundreds of people from rural Rother. The service is a partnership between Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust and the GP practices in the primary care network.

Seaford - Patients in Seaford are being invited to vaccination clinics at both the Seaford Health Centre on Dane Road and the Old School Surgery on Church Street on Saturday 30th January, subject to vaccine delivery.

Brighton & Hove

Every GP practice in Brighton & Hove is now covered by one of the three active GP led vaccination services for the city. This means that all registered patients will be able to access the vaccine at their allocated service as appointments are made available.

The GP led vaccination services for Brighton & Hove are currently Brighton Racecourse, County Oak Medical Centre and Portslade Health Centre.

West Sussex

Every GP practice in West Sussex is now covered by an active GP led vaccination service. This means that all registered patients will be able to access the vaccine at their allocated service as appointments are made available.

Why aren't all GP-led or local vaccination services open every day?

The regularity of when services are open depends largely on vaccine supply levels, which varies from service to service.

For GP-led or local vaccination services, not being open every day is not unusual. In Sussex, and across the country, these types of services are running dedicated days to offer vaccination appointments to patients in line with the number of doses they have available. Therefore, you can expect them to be open for around 3 or 4 days a week, and not every day.

This also allows GP practice teams to maintain both the day to day care for their patients and the vaccination programme. It is really important that the local population can still have access to their GP for non-COVID-19 related.

It is important to remember that the GP-led and local vaccination services are one part of the overarching vaccination programme.

People in the eligible groups are also being invited to the larger vaccination centre at Brighton Centre, select pharmacy services, as well as vaccinations taking place in care homes and for those who are housebound.

Accessible Information in Community Languages

Sussex Health and Care Partnership have published a page with helpful translated information around COVID-19 and the vaccination programme:

www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/keepsussexsafe/sussex-covid-19-vaccination-programme/translated-covid-19-resources/

Sussex Interpreting Services have developed pages in six community languages; [Arabic](#), [Bengali](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Farsi](#), [Polish](#) and [Portuguese](#) to support people to find out information about health and social care needs. The pages can be accessed directly and easily from the SIS home page www.sussexinterpreting.org.uk and are being updated on a weekly basis.

If there are any NHS vaccine related documents that would be helpful to have translated please contact antonia.bennett1@nhs.net and we will arrange for translated copies.

Information for people who have been recently vaccinated

The COVID-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you getting the COVID-19 disease. **It may take a week or two** for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine.

Although you should get good protection from the first dose, having the second dose should give **you longer lasting protection** against the virus.

Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

The vaccine cannot give you the COVID-19 infection, and 2 doses will reduce your chance of becoming seriously ill.

We do not yet know whether it will stop you from catching and passing on the virus. So, it is important to follow the guidance in your local area to protect those around you.

To **protect** yourself and your family, friends and colleagues you still need to:

- practice social distancing
 - wear a face mask
 - wash your hands carefully and frequently
 - follow the [current guidance](#)

Warning! Vaccination Scam Alerts

The NHS is issuing a fresh warning for people to be on their guard, as new scam messages are being sent to patients. This week there have been fresh reports that some people are receiving fake scam calls, emails and text messages offering the COVID-19 vaccination.

In some of the most recent cases, people are receiving a notification of their 'vaccination appointment' and are being asked to confirm it by clicking on a link.

This looks very similar to the genuine texts being sent by GP practice vaccination teams and the NHS is worried people will be conned by them or will not respond to their genuine invitations.

The NHS has this advice for patients:

- An official NHS text message will include details of your GP practice or the details of the team arranging these appointments (in places this is the GP Federation that supports your GP practice). It may also include details of the local vaccination service and its location;
- Scam text messages and emails are not including local information such as your GP practice details or where you are invited to attend;
- The COVID-19 vaccination is only available by the NHS and it is free – you will never be asked to pay for it or your bank details.

Shielding advice for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable People

All clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people should now have been advised by a letter from the Government to follow [shielding guidance](#), which includes information on what support is available to them. Emails and texts have also been sent to many people on the list where contact information is available.

The Shielded Patient List remains a live list, with people newly considered as CEV being continually added (e.g. people with a new diagnosis that changes their risk status). You can find out more [here](#).

Certain areas of the country are now moving into vaccinations for the next priority groups, including people aged 75+, 70+ and CEV people in areas where there is capacity to vaccinate beyond the current groups. Approximately half of the 2.3m CEV people are under 70 years old.

Some of the **key messages** around the vaccination programme include:



- Vaccination delivery is via GP practices, PCNs, in hospital hubs and community pharmacies as well as the mass vaccination centres.
- CEV people living within 45 minutes of a mass vaccination centre will be contacted from now by letter from the national booking system. They will have the option to wait for a local centre invitation if they prefer. Others living outside this radius will be contacted via their local service.
- CEV people should continue to access the healthcare they need, which includes leaving the house to get vaccinated.

- CEV people are advised by the government to continue following shielding rules after they have had both of their vaccination jabs. Government guidance on this will be shared shortly.

Wash Hands, Cover Face, Make Space

As we spend more time indoors, we need to do whatever we can to protect each other. This national campaign aims to make sure we remember to wash our hands, wear a face covering, and make space (by maintaining social distance).



These are the three most effective ways by which, together, we can control the spread of COVID-19.

Hands - Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using hand sanitiser, regularly throughout the day will reduce the risk of catching or passing on the virus.

Face - Coronavirus is carried in the air by tiny respiratory droplets that carry the virus. Face coverings reduce the spread of these droplets, meaning if you're carrying the virus you're less likely to pass it on when you exhale. Find out how to make your own face covering on the gov.uk [website](#).

Space - Transmission of the virus is most likely to happen within 2 metres. While keeping this exact distance isn't always possible, remaining mindful of surroundings and continuing to make space has a powerful impact when it comes to containing the spread.

Local Support Available

Find out about services that can help with specific issues, like mental health support, and what to do if you can't get food, medicines, or are lonely and isolated, on your council's website:

- [Brighton and Hove Community Hubs](#)

Brighton and Hove Community Support Telephone: 01273 293117

- [East Sussex Community Hubs](#)
- [West Sussex Community Hubs](#)

West Sussex Support Team Telephone: 033 022 27980 (Lines are open 8.00am - 8.00pm)

NHS Volunteer Responders are still providing vital support to people vulnerable to COVID-19 and this will continue until at least March 2021. The scheme continues to accept new referrals, and volunteers are ready to provide vital support to those who meet the criteria. You can [contact the NHS Volunteer Responder Service online](#) or call on 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm seven days a week). If you are interested in volunteering as a steward for the COVID-19 vaccination programme, you can also do this through the [NHS Volunteer Responders scheme](#)

National Updates

The latest position in terms of confirmed cases of COVID-19, broken down into total UK cases and local areas, is [updated daily](#).

National Lockdown: Stay at Home – find out what you can and cannot do during the national lockdown [here](#).

The **NHS COVID-19 app** is available to download for free in England and Wales. Download it [here](#).

Information on **face coverings**, when to wear one and how to make your own, can be found [here](#).

Safer travel guidance for people using public transport can be found [here](#).

Getting tested for Coronavirus - information is available [here](#).

Getting **financial help and staying safe** at work information is available [here](#).

All the [latest national advice and guidance](#) is available on the Gov.uk website. Health and care organisations across Sussex are all working together to protect and support our local communities.

Everyone can do their part to restrict the spread of the virus. Stay at home if you can, keep a distance and protect each other when you have to go out. People are being urged to **Keep Sussex Safe**.

You can also raise issues through Healthwatch, which is an independent body responsible for gathering people's views of health and social care services. Contact details are below:

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove:

Telephone: 01273 234 040

Email: info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/contact-us/>

Healthwatch East Sussex

Telephone: 0333 101 4007

Email: enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk/contact/>

Healthwatch West Sussex

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

Email: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website: <https://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk/contact-us>

NHS Sussex Commissioners Public Involvement Team Contact Details

If you have any questions, or if you need this brief in an alternative format, please contact the Public Involvement Team:

Email: sxccg.involvement@nhs.net

Phone: 01903 708 411

Post: FREEPOST RTUZ-ECYG-ERRK

Attn: Public Involvement Team, NHS Brighton & Hove
Clinical Commissioning Group

Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Brighton, BN3 4AH

SignLive: Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us between 09:00-17:00 Monday- Friday through the [Video Relay Service \(VRS\) 'SignLive'](#). Simply download the [SignLive app](#), register your details, and search for NHS Brighton and Hove in the Community Directory. If the call goes to answerphone please leave a message, with your name and SignLive ID code and we will call you back as soon as possible.

Previous versions of the briefing can be accessed via the news section on the CCGs websites:

[NHS Brighton and Hove CCG](#), [NHS East Sussex CCG](#), and [NHS West Sussex CCG](#).
