

Harpenden Health PCN COVID Vaccination update

Harpenden Health Primary Care Network (HPCN) was formed in 2019 and consists of the three GP Practices in Harpenden; namely Davenport House, the Elms Medical Practice and the Village Surgery. We cover Harpenden, Wheathampstead, Redbourn and the surrounding villages.

We are pleased to announce that our PCN was informed yesterday that we will be joining wave 6 of the national COVID Vaccination programme. We will be using:

Harpenden Public Halls, Southdown Road, Harpenden AL5 1TE

to immunise everyone apart from housebound patients and those living in care homes. The Halls were chosen as it is centrally located, accessible and is available for the six or more months it may take to complete the vaccination programme.

**Care home residents will be vaccinated by the PCN by the end of January 2021.
Housebound patients will be vaccinated as soon as it can be organised with
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH) who provide all the
District Nursing services to our Practices.**

The Harpenden Public Halls & Your Appointment

To assist access to Harpenden Public Halls, the route via Southdown Road will have temporary traffic arrangements in place to help improve access. This will allow for a drop off area for the elderly or disabled, who will be assisted at the Halls by GP staff and volunteers.

There are parking spaces at back of the Halls for the disabled who need a carer to come in with them, again this area is supervised by volunteers. There are not many spaces so please only use them if essential and for the minimum time possible.

Please attend your appointment alone unless you are both having vaccinations. We have plenty of volunteers and 4 wheelchairs for anyone requiring assistance. It is important to minimise footfall in the building to keep you safer and prevent transmission of COVID. Assuming the clinics are running smoothly you will be ready to leave within 30 to 45 minutes.

Until Christmas the Public Halls were being used by 1-Life as a gym. Since then we have transformed the Halls to become fit for the purposes of a mass vaccination programme in a safe, socially distanced environment for all. We are confident that we will be able to vaccinate all patients as quickly as vaccine supplies are delivered to us.

The Harpenden Trust

You may be interested to know that The Harpenden Trust has recruited over 600 volunteers to assist HPCN in running safe efficient clinics. We have also had dozens of professionals volunteer to help and thereby increase the number of vaccinators. This is hugely appreciated by all three Practices as it will allow us to continue to provide near normal GP and Nursing services from our surgeries. Thank you to all the volunteers.

Who Cannot Have a Covid-19 Vaccine?

You cannot have a COVID vaccination if:

- you have any COVID symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss or change in your sense of smell or taste
- you are awaiting a COVID swab result

Under these circumstances, please cancel your appointment so it can become available for someone else. You will be given another appointment as soon as possible thereafter.

The National Guidance:

HHPCN will be following the national guidance from the Joint Committee for Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) regarding the order in which people will be invited to attend for vaccination. This priority list is as follows:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality. Also Carers in receipt of Carers allowance or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Further information on JCVI advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020>

Guidance is continually being updated and is subject to change.

There is evidence that infection rates are higher in residential care home staff than in those providing domiciliary care for family members which is why care home workers are being offered higher priority vaccinations. We therefore will not be able to offer higher priority vaccinations than group 6 to family carers unless the Carer is over 65 years old.

Contacting Your GP Surgery

Vaccinations will start next week. Please do not contact your surgery to enquire when you will receive an invitation, we will contact you as soon as it is your turn. Please also be aware that when the Practices telephone they will never ask you to press numbers on your keypad or for any bank details.

If you are a frontline health care professional or social care worker, your surgery may not have these details in your computer records, so please email your surgery to let them know. These groups are priority two but we may not know, so cannot invite you for vaccination.

It is not possible to predict when that will be, nor is it possible to request which COVID vaccination (Pfizer/BioTech or Oxford/AstraZeneca) you will receive.

We can assure you that HHPCN will be vaccinating as many people as quickly as possible.

Our preferred method of inviting you to attend Harpenden Public Halls is by using a new fully automated booking system called AccuBook. This requires you to have a smart mobile phone, but do not be concerned if you do not have a smart phone as we will telephone or write to you instead.

Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) have produced this informative FAQ, please click on the link below:

<https://hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-know>

For further up to date information – please go to your GP Surgery homepage where regular updates on the Harpenden Vaccination programme will be posted going forward.

Thank you

Dr David Hems, Dr Tania Goodwin and Dr Chas Thenuwara
Harpenden Health PCN (Primary Care Network)

Offering enhanced care and services to the patients of Davenport House Surgery, The Elms Medical Practice & The Village Surgery