

Harpenden Health PCN COVID Vaccination Update

This is the sixth newsletter in what is a regular update from Harpenden Health Primary Care Network (HHPCN) on the mass COVID vaccination programme for our registered patients and local communities.

It is the definitive source for up-to-date factual information.

It will be posted on the three GP Practices websites, where all previous newsletters are easily accessible too. It will also be circulated by The Harpenden Trust.

Update:

Harpenden Public Halls opened for COVID vaccinations on Wednesday 13th January 2021. Since then, regular COVID vaccination clinics have been running whenever we have had supplies of vaccine.

As soon as we are notified of the date of the next vaccine delivery, more patients will be contacted, and more appointments will be arranged.

Harpenden Public Halls COVID vaccination centre operates by appointment only.

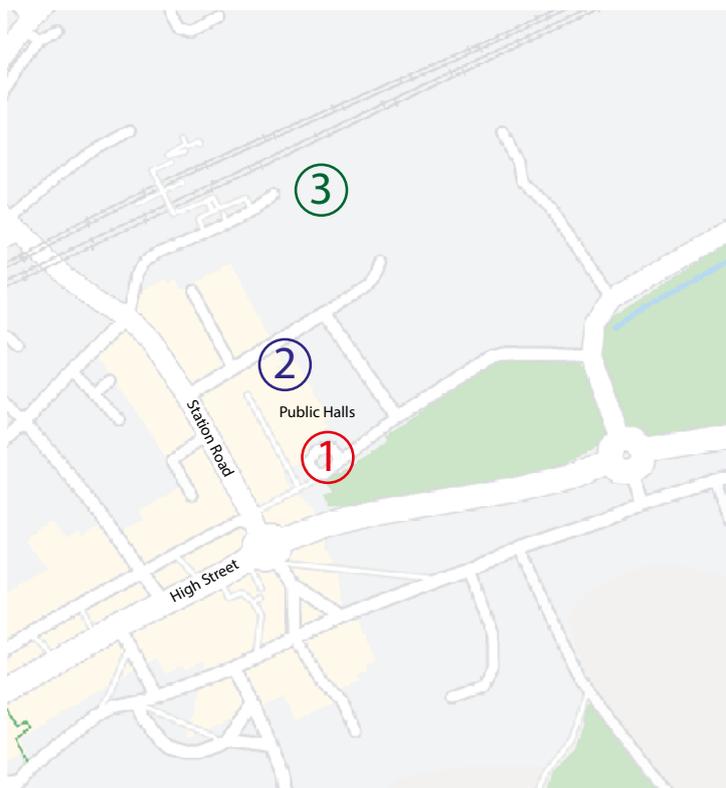
Please do not visit us unless you have an appointment as not only does this delay our work, it also increases our risk of catching COVID from an asymptomatic carrier.

We have vaccinated all registered patients in cohorts 1 to 6 who wanted vaccination.

If you are in cohort 1 to 6 and have not received your invitation for vaccination yet, or indeed have changed your mind and want to be vaccinated now, then please contact your Practice and ask for an appointment.

We have already inviting people in cohort 9 to our next clinics booked on 24th and 25th March 2021. These clinics are for first doses and are using the Oxford Astra Zeneca (AZ) vaccine.

Harpenden Station has granted the HHPCN COVID Vaccination Clinic access to the car park on the same side as the ticket office. Parking options are as follows:



Harpenden Health
PCN

Where should I park for my vaccine appointment?"

1. Patient Drop Off Only (in front of Public Halls)
2. Patient/Carer Blue Badge Parking (car park at the rear of Public Halls)
3. Patient/Waiting to Pick Up Parking (station car park town side. Entry near to taxi rank)

On the 22/2/2021 our local MP and Harpenden Halls volunteer Bim Afolami received a letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care commending our efforts. Matt Hancock wrote:

- I wanted to write to you to let you know that Harpenden Health PCN is one of the highest performing vaccination areas in the country.
- Harpenden has been a magnificent example of how a whole community can come together to deliver a truly outstanding result. I would like to congratulate and thank you for your effort to date.
- Our Government is doing everything it can to ensure the vaccination programme rolls out speedily and effectively, and know that you will soon be able to look back and be proud of what your community has achieved.

Since that date HHPCN has met with Bim Afolami and the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment Nadhim Zahawi to discuss our local vaccination service (LVS) at Harpenden Public Halls. They were both very supportive and full of praise for our efforts to date, gave assurances that vaccine supplies would improve and were strongly encouraging of our intentions to continue vaccinating all our patients in cohorts 1 to 12 (everyone aged over 18 years old and at risk children under 18 years of age)

The letter, in full, from Matt Hancock can be read by clicking on this link:

<https://www.bimafolami.co.uk/sites/www.bimafolami.co.uk/files/2021-02/1307824%20-%20Bim%20Afolami%20MP.pdf>

Progress Report:

To date around 11,000 vaccinations have been performed for HHPCN registered patients.

HHPCN continues to follow the latest guidance issued by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI) last updated on 6/1/2021:

<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>

COVID vaccine supplies are limited and NHS England are using regional differences in vaccination rates achieved to date to allocate vaccine supplies on a weekly basis.

This ensures that people in the highest priority groups have access to vaccine supplies.

Second doses are due to be given around 11 weeks after the first dose and at the same place as the first dose. Currently the only group of people to receive second doses at 3-4 weeks are those about to start immunosuppressive therapy for the first time.

On 27th March 2021, we will begin second doses for those who received their first doses at Harpenden Public Halls.

If 11 weeks after you received your first dose at Harpenden Public Halls, you have not received your second dose invitation then please contact your Practice:

- If registered with the Village Surgery, please use the online communication service on our website using the heading general enquiry.
- If registered with Davenport House, please use the contact us section on the Practice website.
- If registered with the Elms Medical Practice, please email elmsmedical@nhs.net

Please do not just turn up at the vaccination centre without an appointment.

Patients second dose will be of the same brand as their first dose. Please remember to bring your card and we will complete it with details of your second dose.

We are pleased to announce that vaccine supplies will be increasing and that HHPCN has applied to continue COVID vaccinating in phase 2. This will mean that our local vaccination service will continue to operate throughout the summer and that all our patients will not have to travel to mass vaccinations centres.

Some Frequently Asked Questions:

You will see below in the updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) answers to many of the queries people have at the present time.

1) Which group is Harpenden Health PCN (HHPCN) currently vaccinating?

At present we are inviting all patients in cohorts 1-9 to have their first doses and have just begun inviting patients who received their first dose in mid-January for their second doses.

2) Does Harpenden Health PCN have enough vaccine to continue with the vaccination programme in light of the recent government announcement on vaccine shortages?

Local vaccination centres have been given assurances that they will receive sufficient second dose supplies for all patients who have had their first dose with them. Second doses are due between 11 and 12 weeks after the first.

We also have plenty of vaccine available for all patients in cohorts 1-9 to be vaccinated with their first dose in Harpenden so please do not worry. As soon as we know when we will be delivered vaccine, we arrange clinics and send out invitations. Frequently this is with less than one week notice.

3) I have not been invited for my second dose yet, should I be concerned or try and book my second dose through 119 at a mass vaccination centre?

Invitations for second doses will be sent out a few weeks before they are due. If you have not been contacted by the 11 week mark post first vaccination then please do contact your GP surgery:

If registered with the Village Surgery, please use the online communication service on our website using the heading general enquiry.

If registered with Davenport House, please use the contact us section on the Practice website.

If registered with the Elms Medical Practice, please email elmsmedical@nhs.net

If you have had your first dose of vaccine at the Harpenden Public Halls your second dose has been ordered for you and will be delivered to the same location. It is therefore very important that you attend the same site for your second dose as you did your first. The only exception to this rule should be if you have moved out of the area or likewise just moved into this area.

You will definitely be invited by your Practice to attend Harpenden Public Halls if that is where you had your first dose. Please ignore any invitations from the National Booking Service (NBS) if you are in cohorts 1 to 9 and received your first dose at Harpenden Public Halls. Some patients have received texts from the NBS already but this is a mistake, you should wait for your Practice to contact you

4) I am in cohort 10-12 can I be vaccinated now?

The government have made it very clear that they will advise when cohorts 10-12 can be invited for their vaccines. Until this time we are being urged to encourage all those in cohorts 1 to 4 who have not yet taken up the offer of vaccination to do so and all those in cohorts 5-9 who are currently being invited to attend.

Cohorts 10-12 include all people aged 18 to 49 years who have not been vaccinated as part of a higher priority group. This is phase 2 of the government COVID vaccinations policy and Harpenden Health PCN has applied to be allowed to use the National Booking Service (NBS). This will mean patients will get notice of their second appointment at the same time as they receive their first appointment. NBS is currently only used by the mass vaccinations sites and pharmacies. At present PCNs are not allowed to offer both appointments, hence why we have applied to join the NBS.

We are expecting much greater supplies of vaccine such that our patients in phase 2 (cohorts 10-12) will not need to travel to mass vaccination sites as you will be able to choose Harpenden Public Halls for your first vaccination once you receive your invitation from the National Booking Service.

5) Do you have a vaccine reserve waiting list that I can be put on?

We have had quite a few enquiries from patients asking to be added to a reserve waiting list. We plan our clinics very precisely on the number of vaccines delivered to avoid any leftover doses at the end of each day. If we do have unexpected vaccine doses available at the end of the day, then we invite patients who are booked into subsequent clinics along earlier to ensure that we are vaccinating patients in those cohorts we have permission to vaccinate.

6) Cancelling appointments.

If you are not able to come to your vaccine appointment, please do remember to cancel it to allow the appointment slot to be released for someone else. We understand that people have busy lives or the unexpected happens and so if you miss your time slot and realise on the same day, then please do feel you can come down to the vaccine centre as soon as you can as we may still be able to vaccinate you.

7) I am pregnant and not sure whether to have the vaccine.

At the moment, the COVID-19 vaccine will only be offered to you if you are pregnant and at high risk of catching COVID-19. However, this advice may change as more safety data accrues because of the concerns around the risks associated with this infection in the later stages of pregnancy.

We recognise this may be a difficult decision for you to make. We are here to listen to your concerns and provide you with information which may help you to make an informed decision.

Please have a look at the following link which you may find useful.

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/2021-02-24-combined-info-sheet-and-decision-aid.pdf>

8) I have read in the news that there has been concern in Europe that the Oxford Astra Zeneca (AZ) vaccine may be associated with a risk of blood clots. I have a history of blood clots, should I avoid having the AZ vaccine?

The MHRA, the UK safety regulator for medicines and vaccines, has advised that there is no proven association between thrombosis and the AZ vaccine. Blood clots can occur naturally and are not uncommon. If you have had a previous blood clot depending on the cause of this, you may be at higher risk of a subsequent one and as such been prescribed medication to prevent this. There is no evidence that your risk is increased further by having the AZ vaccine. However, what we do know for certain is that there is an association between COVID-19 disease and thrombosis so we would urge you to speak to us and make an informed decision on risks versus benefits. As of 19 March 2021, a number of countries who had halted use of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine have resumed rolling out this vaccine.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-regulator-confirms-that-people-should-continue-to-receive-the-covid-19-vaccine-astrazeneca>

9) Should I be worried if I get a headache or bruising after my vaccine?

Headaches for up to 48 hours post vaccine and bruising at the injection site are listed as common side effects and should not be a cause for concern. However, if a post vaccination headache persists for more than 4 days or spontaneous bruising at a site away from the injection site develops it is recommended that you consult your GP for advice.

This is because the type of thrombosis that has been highlighted in Europe and studied in the most recent safety investigations relates to a very rare type of blood clot in the brain. It has been noted these patients may also have low levels of blood cells responsible for clotting which can cause spontaneous bruising. It is a bit of an oddity as when these cells known as platelets are low, we might expect to have a lower risk of blood clots but the body in fact responds by releasing young hyperactive clotting cells which in turn lead to higher levels of tiny platelet particles which promote clotting factors in the blood so making blood clots more common.

10) I have read that having the vaccine may affect my mammogram result. Should I delay my mammogram?

A recent article in the British Medical Journal reported that advice in the US is that breast screening appointments should be scheduled to take place before women receive a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine or four to six weeks after the second dose where possible as there is a potential for glands under the arm injected to be increased in number and size temporarily post vaccination.

Public Health England (PHE) advise that breast screening service personnel are aware of the potential for enlarged lymph nodes following a COVID-19 vaccination. There is currently no requirement for women to be advised to delay attending a mammogram screening appointment following a COVID-19 vaccination.

11) Will having the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

There is no evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccine affects fertility. The information below may be helpful. <https://www.rcm.org.uk/media-releases/2021/january/statement-from-rcm-and-rcog-on-covid-19-vaccinations-fertility-and-pregnancy/#:~:text=Dr%20Edward%20Morris%2C%20President%20at,not%20supported%20by%20any%20data>

12) If I do have side effects of the vaccine who should I contact?

If symptoms are mild, please follow the advice on the patient information leaflet you will be given at the time of vaccination. If they are prolonged or severe then please do contact your GP. We would also encourage patients to report any side effects to the MHRA by using the yellow card reporting system online. <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

Please use the link below to view previous newsletters and answers to other common frequently asked questions (FAQs).

[Dr David Hems, Dr Tania Goodwin and Dr Chas Thenuwara](#)
[Harpden Health PCN \(Primary Care Network\)](#)

[Offering enhanced care and services to the patients of Davenport House Surgery, The Elms Medical Practice & The Village Surgery](#)

For the latest Corona Virus Updates Please Follow the Links Below:

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[The Elms Medical Practice](#)

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