

COVID-19 Vaccination update

We are really pleased to be able to share an update with you about the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

We are all working incredibly hard to deliver the Covid-19 vaccine and are on track to offer vaccines to our most vulnerable patients by the middle of February.

Understandably, this is very challenging to deliver. Our practice is part of a group of local GP practices called the St Ives Primary Care Network (PCN) looking after the healthcare of patients in the local area. It was agreed nationally that the vaccinations will be delivered to one GP practice within each PCN which will act as a hub to give the vaccinations to patients of all practices within the PCN. By using one location it means we can use all our skilled staff in one location to provide the vaccination clinics. Our local vaccination hub is the Old Exchange Surgery on East Street in St Ives.

Our site became operational on Saturday 16 January 2021. We are notified about each vaccine delivery three days before it is due to arrive and only then can we start to book patients in.

The vaccine priority groups (i.e. who gets called for a vaccine when) have been decided centrally by NHS England. We have no ability to alter this or make exceptions. The first groups to be vaccinated are over 80s, care home residents and staff, health and social care workers. As we have almost completed these groups, we will soon start inviting patients in their late 70s.

As each cohort is completed, we can then begin calling those in the next priority group. We are not allowed to offer a choice of vaccine. Again, this is a national mandate. Our priority has to be to ensure that no vaccine is wasted, and that every dose is given to an eligible patient. Automated booking systems are being used to help deal with the huge administrative task of booking thousands of vaccine appointments in an extremely tight timescale and to ensure the process is easy and efficient for our patients to use.

Those with mobile phone numbers on their records will be contacted by text initially, therefore if we do not have a record of your current mobile number, please ensure you update us with your mobile number. As soon as we are able to book appointments for your age group you will be contacted.

We understand that everyone is eager to have the vaccine, but please **DO NOT** contact Reception about this until you are invited to do so. As we are sure you can imagine, we are all working incredibly hard to deliver the vaccine to our patients, at the same time as providing care to all those who need it. Please be aware that while we are delivering Covid-19 vaccinations some of our routine clinics and appointments may need to be postponed or rearranged. We will contact you directly if this impacts you – please do not contact the surgery. If you do not hear from us, please attend your booked appointment.

For anyone who's had their vaccine it's essential you continue to follow national guidelines as well as continuing to wash your hands, wear a face mask and social distance from other people.

You can find out more about the local Covid-19 vaccination programme here:

<https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/covid-19-national-vaccination-programme/>

Thank you for your ongoing support.