

BNSSG Healthier Together Covid-19 Vaccination Programme

Key messages from the Clinical Delivery Group

Edition 1: 15 January 2021

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1. Who we are

The Clinical Delivery Group (CDG) is responsible for ensuring that the BNSSG Covid-19 vaccination roll-out is clinically driven and informed.

The group is chaired by Dr Tim Whittlestone, clinical lead for the vaccination programme and Deputy Medical Director at North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT). Colleagues from across the system are represented on the group including primary care, secondary care, community partners, pharmacists and cultural ambassadors. The CDG reports to BNSSG and serves the whole population.

This is the first in a series of regular updates from the CDG which we hope will be useful as the programme continues to gather pace. Please do let us know any thoughts or feedback here: bnssg.massvaccination@nhs.net

2. Vaccination programme overview

Since the first vaccination took place at the NBT hospital hub in December, we have launched 19 Primary Care Network (PCN) sites, a further two hospital hubs and the largescale site at Ashton Gate football stadium. In the coming days and weeks we are launching delivery sites in community pharmacies and dedicated employer hubs with large providers of care.

Everyone involved has worked incredibly hard to roll out vaccination, and we would like to thank all our colleagues across the system for your efforts in getting us this far. We are currently moving at pace in cohort 2 of the Joint Council for Vaccination and Immunology (JCVI) prioritisation guidance, which is all frontline health and social care staff.

An exercise is underway currently for employers to determine the numbers of staff in patient-facing roles, after which a booking link for vaccination slots will be distributed. Due to the incredible speed of the roll out and the logistic issues with multiple vaccines, delivery schedules, consumables and guidance this means that slots for vaccination often come on line with short notice and we hope that you will bear with us until the system is smoother.

In terms of delivery, regionally we are doing very well having vaccinated a majority of care home residents and staff and a significant proportion of over 80 year olds.

It is heartening that so many staff advocate that their patient groups should be vaccinated. We are guided by the roll out agenda set by JVC. Alongside age, clinical vulnerability is deemed to be a risk factor for severe Covid-19 symptoms and death. The majority of patients with clinical vulnerability fall into cohort 4. As soon as this becomes the priority cohort we will ask staff to help us how best to reach these individuals.

3. Second dose intervals – guidance and BNSSG position

In line with the national ambition to protect as many people from Covid-19 as possible in the shortest time; we have moved to the following position in BNSSG as of 11 January:

- All second (booster) doses are to be scheduled within 10 – 12 weeks of the first dose appointment, with the majority taking place in week 12.

As the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Jonathan Van Tam, has said:

“The evidence clearly shows vaccinated individuals get almost complete protection after the first dose.

Simply put, every time we vaccinate someone a second time, we are not vaccinating someone else for the first time. It means we are missing an opportunity to greatly reduce the chances of the most vulnerable people getting severely ill from Covid-19.

If a family has two elderly grandparents and there are two vaccines available, it is better to give both 89 per cent protection than to give one 95 per cent protection with two quick doses, and the other grandparent no protection at all.”

In summary both vaccine brands offer exceptionally good levels of protection from around two weeks after a single dose (70-90% effective in various studies). There is some theoretical advantage in prolonging the interval between doses as this could offer the maximum immunity.

4. Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) Guidance

Across BNSSG we are prioritising people in line with guidance from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). We have made significant progress vaccinating those in the first two categories:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
- All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers

Thanks to the hard work of our staff we are on track to meet the national ambition to offer first doses to everyone in the top priority groups by the middle of February. You can see the full prioritisation list on the [JCVI website](#).

5. Pregnancy and vaccination

We understand that there are lots of questions coming though on the safety and efficacy of vaccination during pregnancy. There are three main touch points for advice on pregnancy and vaccination in BNSSG for you to draw on as clinicians or staff at vaccination centres:

- **Patient facing advice:** including a leaflet from PHE: [A guide to Covid-19 vaccination – all women of childbearing age, those currently pregnant or breastfeeding](#), a leaflet from the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists: [I am pregnant and have been offered the Covid-19 vaccination what are my options](#) and offer them the opportunity to read the [UKTIS advice](#)
- **Helpline:** If more advice is required you can ring the obstetrician on call at Southmead Hospital via 0117 950 5050
- **Antenatal appointments:** If the obstetrician is unavailable, the service user can (if they wish) be booked into the next available antenatal clinic for a consultation with a specialist
 - If delivery is booked at Southmead hospital for their pregnancy then email maternityreferrals@nbt.nhs.uk with their MRN and contact details and reason for appointment
 - If booked at St Michael's Hospital for their pregnancy then email AntenatalBookingTeam@uhbw.nhs.uk

If the staff member or service user in the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Group has chosen to be vaccinated, accepting that there is no safety data, a patient specific direction can be completed by a prescriber and the vaccination can be administered.

6. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) groups

For those who are CEV, the advice is to continue to shield. We are expecting further detailed advice from the chief medical officer in the coming weeks, but this group should continue to shield for now, even once a first dose of vaccine has been administered.

7. Urticarial rash following first vaccine dose

Incidences of urticarial rash following a first dose of vaccine should be discussed on a case by case basis with the senior prescriber in your vaccine centre. Further advice can be obtained by email from NHS England and Improvement's regional team: england.swcovid19-cars@nhs.net

8. Anaphylaxis

The Pfizer vaccine is contraindicated for anyone with previous anaphylactoid reaction to any of the constituents of the vaccine. This includes people who have been advised to carry EpiPens for severe allergy to drugs and foodstuffs.

The AstraZeneca Oxford vaccine is only contraindicated in individuals who have had a previous adverse reaction to it during clinical trials.

Please see the attached document for further advice on the management of patients with reported allergies.

9. The Ashton Gate centre and patient choice

NHS England and NHS Improvement have issued a national letter to those currently eligible to receive a vaccination and who live within 45 minutes of the stadium.

We are clear as the BNSSG CDG that patients can choose Ashton Gate if it is a convenient venue for them, but if they would rather wait for their local primary care vaccination centre to get in touch, this is also an option available to them.

We appreciate that some people will be unable or unwilling to use public transport to get to the centre when there is a closer option available locally. The centre at Ashton Gate provides additional capacity to our 19 PCN sites across BNSSG.

Please emphasise to the public that BNSSG, in line with national guidance, does not offer a turn up and be vaccinated service. All appointments have to be booked by the GP practice or through the National Booking System. Staff vaccinations are booked by a dedicated booking system called DoctorDr and unique URL links are sent to staff.

10. BNSSG vaccination 'clearing process'

We have now set up a clearing process for last minute staff vaccination appointments which is being run by the Local Coordination Centre (LCC) at Severnside.

Any appointments are notified to the LCC by 2pm each day. The LCC passes employer staff lists to the vaccination centres and PCNs, who then invite staff in directly. Updated lists are being sent through to the LCC on a regular basis so that we can make best use of our capacity and ensure minimal vaccine wastage.

11. Cultural considerations

There are many individuals working within BNSSG who are progressing conversations with cultural groups who may be hesitant to receive the Covid-19 vaccines. We have formed a committee to oversee these endeavours and promote vaccination and best practice. They will provide an update to the BNSSG community next week with practical advice and support.

Keeping in touch

The vaccination programme is a complex one and moving at pace – as such, we want to ensure you receive regular and relevant updates from the CDG and the wider programme team.

Please feel free to share any feedback or communication needs with the BNSSG CCG comms team: bnssg.communications@nhs.net